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STORAGE

THE

LETTERS

OF

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ

Carnavalet Edition

NEWLY RE-EDITED, REVISED AND CORRECTED,
INCLUDING OVER THREE HUNDRED
LETTERS NOT PREVIOUSLY
TRANSLATED INTO
ENGLISH

IN SEVEN VOLUMES

VOLUME VII

The Carnavalet Edition of

The Letters

of

Madame de Sévigné

is in seven volumes, and is limited to fifteen hundred and fifty numbered sets. The number of each set is in the first volume.

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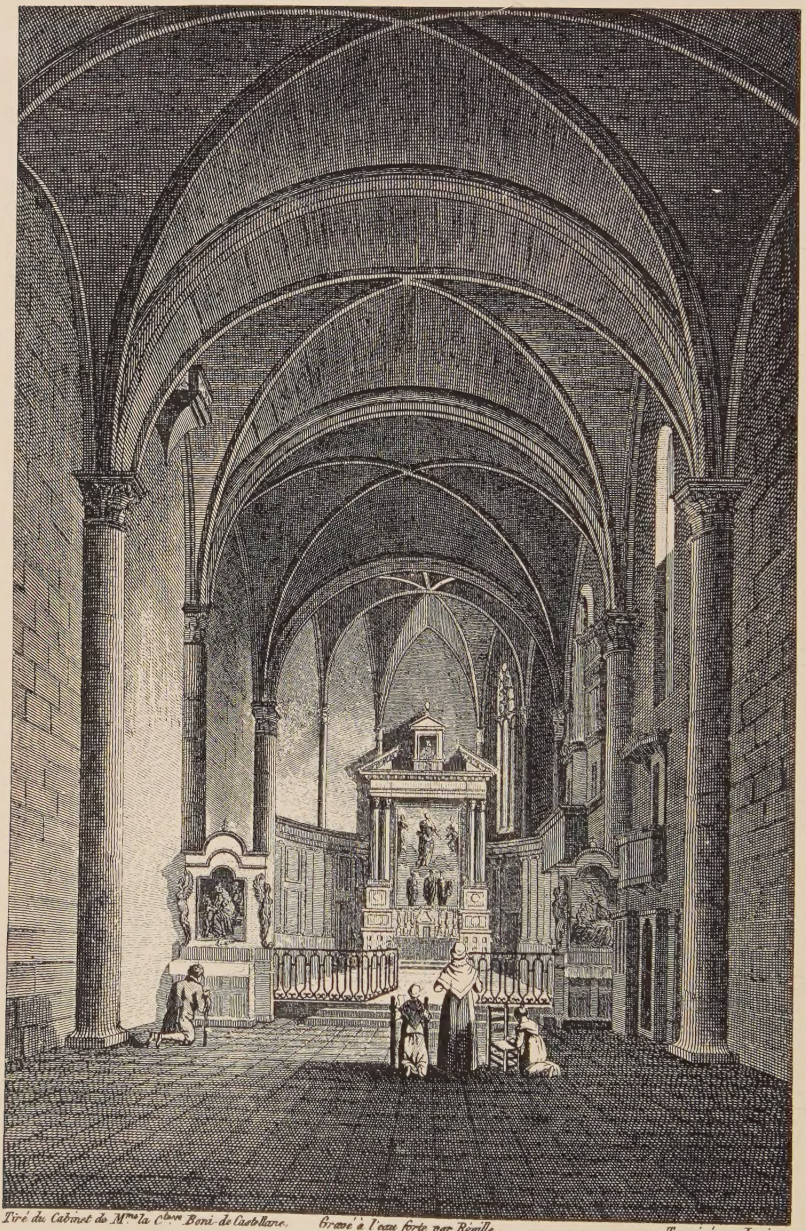

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INTERIOR OF THE COLLEGIATE CHAPEL, GRIGNAN.

THE

LETTERS

OF

MADAME DE SEVIGNÉ

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

A. EDWARD NEWTON

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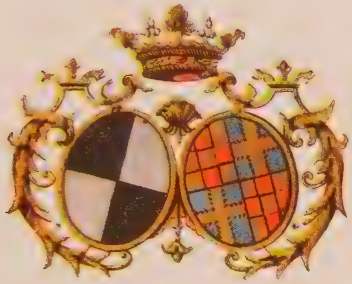
THE LETTERS OF MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ



WITH AN INTRODUCTION

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THE LETTERS OF MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ

LETTER 923

From Madame la Marquise DE SÉVIGNÉ *to her Daughter Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, August 31, 1689.

Your Castle seems to me to make the finest appearance possible; two tables served at the same moment, give me a high opinion of Flame [1]; he is at least another Honoré [2]. These abilities are a great relief to the mind of the mistress of a house: but this magnificence is very destructive; it is not a trifle, to support such a splendid and elegant style, in such a house as yours. I have just seen a representation of it, in the stroke of a wand, flourished by Honoré, which makes everything he pleases rise out of the earth at his command. I know the charms, and even the necessity, of such manners, but I likewise see the consequences, and so do you. You remind me of our poor Abbé de Pontcarré, in speaking of Champigny: he seems to me to be related to him in every respect, except that he did not eat so much; for the Trojan and the Papoul are not at all wiser, and our Pontcarré seemed to think of nothing but feasting. I formerly said of the late M. de Rennes [3], that he marked the leaves of his breviary with

[1] M. de Grignan's steward.

[2] M. de Chaulnes's steward.

[3] Charles-François de La Vieuville, Bishop of Rennes, died the 29th of January, 1676.

slices of ham; your Valence[1] would not despise this kind of signet; indeed his face was a perfect luminary of the church, and, as soon as twelve struck, *Monseigneur* laid aside all business. M. de Grignan will be pleased to see his old friend Canaples at his house, who is going to the waters of Vals, because he is at Paris; and M. d'Arles is going to Forges, because he is in the neighbourhood of Vals; so true it is, even to these very fountains, *that no one is a prophet in his own country*; I address this to M. d'Arles. I like what you said upon first seeing Larrei, "Is it you?" and his ready answer, "No, Madame, it is not I," is such a specimen of vivacity, as shows him to be his father's own son, who had a great share of wit, somewhat coarse, indeed, but lively and pleasant.

But to return to the good de Chaulnes. I related to you the sequel of the courier's arrival at Hennebon, that the King did not wish the affair to be made public, and that everyone at Vannes complimented the Duc and Duchesse on the occasion. We made the Duc relate to us, in his carriage, all the particulars of his former journeys to Rome; you would have been very much amused. No one is more endowed with the true spirit of negotiation; the *mezzo termine* never fail him. I desired him to write an account of all these details, and said to him, "Oh how well judged it is to send you on this Embassy!" We returned to Rennes on the fifteenth, and he set out on the eighteenth, in a chaise, and arrived on Sunday the twenty-first at Versailles: the King sent for him, though covered with dust, and conferred with him for half an hour in his private sanctum. Heaven knows how all the courtiers embraced him, and even M. de Rheims (*Le Tellier*); a man who is going to Rome, can no longer be indifferent to him. He set out on Saturday the twenty-seventh, and will go by way of your Rhône, so that you might see him with a good telescope. The Cardinals are to join him at Lyons; there are twenty-eight galleys at Toulon, which are to

[1] Guillaume Bochard de Champigny, nominated Bishop of Valence in 1687, and consecrated in November 1693.

take them to Leghorn. Coulanges is of the party. You have done well, to write to these good Governors; I am delighted to think you improved the opportunity, and I thank you; it is thus I repay their friendship. They wanted to take me with them at all events; Madame de Chaulnes entreated me in such a manner as to make a refusal embarrassing to me: but Chaulnes is not like *The Rocks*, where I am settling my affairs; besides, she will not remain there long, she must necessarily enjoy the pleasure of a gracious reception at Versailles. The King and his Ministers look with pleasure on the wife of a man who is negotiating the most important business in which it is possible to engage, who is no longer young, and yet flies to execute his commission as he did twenty-three [1] years before. A person is of some consequence at Versailles, upon such occasions as these: M. de Chaulnes desired her earnestly not to absent herself. The good Duchesse reached Paris in six days; she and her horses had like to have perished by the heat: I find it intense only in this part of the world; your north wind tempers the dog-days. Madame de Chaulnes arrived two days before her husband's departure; she writes to me with great friendliness; she will inform me what M. de Chaulnes has done respecting the deputation: I am convinced that they are both more anxious about it than I am; it is their business, and they feel that it is so. I will some day give you an instance of the Duchesse's friendship, which will please you. You are a good and amiable *genius* for having written to M. de Chaulnes. Your brother returns you a thousand thanks, and embraces you a thousand times. This is saying a good deal upon the same subject, I ask your pardon: the reason is, that in retirement things of this kind make a deep impression.

We had, however, a visit on Monday, from M. de La Faluère, his wife, daughter, and son; they supped and slept here, and were delighted with our walks. I know

[1] There was an interval of twenty-three years between M. de Chaulnes's second Embassy to Rome and this third.

not what to tell you respecting our fleet; we have heard nothing of it, since the succour you sent us, and since this armament has been at sea. A man of wit said, the other day, at Rennes, that he had never seen or heard of a complete naval victory, since the battle of Actium; and that all engagements consist in a few broadsides, in dispersing the ships, which are supposed to be sunk, and which appear again in the course of a month; this seemed to us to be the truth. But what say you to the command in Brittany, which ought to content Maréchal d'Estrées, notwithstanding he is deprived of the trifling circumstance of holding the States, which is reserved for M. de Lavardin? This situation was due to the latter, because it is right that everyone should have his turn. You do not think M. de Lavardin will be against us, if we obtain the deputation. I understand that the Maréchal's lady gives herself very little trouble about these trifles, provided she can be at Marly or Trianon. Adieu then, my beloved child; I am persuaded that you will entertain our good Duc very handsomely, upon his return from Rome. I lament the Pope, I lament Avignon. *God gave it, and God has taken it away.* Remember me in the most friendly manner to those around you; I imagine two of the Grignans are at Balaruc. Good heavens! what a translation of Madame de Noailles to Perpignan! how is it possible for her to be absent from Versailles without being pregnant?

LETTER 924

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, September 4, 1689.

It is true that I assumed an air of mystery; M. de Chaulnes intrusted us with his secret in secret: M. de Croissi instructed him he was not yet to mention it; so that I was faithful to my trust, even in Provence. I underlined some words, however, which might, I think, have

given you to understand that I would tell you more the first opportunity. I also told you that we found our secret circulated at Vannes, and how strange this appeared to us. I informed you of the joy of M. de Chaulnes; I told you that his wife, shutting her eyes to all the brilliant side of the question, opened them only to the dangers and perils of so long a journey; we exerted ourselves to divert her from this melancholy prospect, and to make her fix her attention upon the beauty and distinction of the choice so properly conferred by the King, which would create so much envy at Versailles. In short, Revel and I exhausted our rhetoric, and M. de Chaulnes supported us; those who say he hesitated, little know him; he is a man who cannot do things with an ill grace, or bargain with his master. This is the true answer he made him, I think I can tax my memory with this charge: "Sire, Your Majesty commands, and I obey. I shall set out immediately to wait upon you, and receive your commands, etc." Such were the *objections* he made. He set out with great joy, as I have told you, and left all Brittany in great affliction. Madame de Chaulnes went the next day, and arrived in six days at Paris; she has written to me twice, and informs me, that if she had not been thus diligent, she should not have seen M. de Chaulnes; that she was only with him an hour, and that she will send me news of our affairs. I have done well, my dear child, not to go with her, for two reasons; the first is, that she will be very little at Chaulnes, and the second, that when there, that retreat would not be so natural to me as this is, where I have my son's company, and where I have two considerable estates that may oblige me to remain some time in this Province. When you reflect a little, I believe you will find that I am right, and that, if I had returned, I should have frustrated the intention of my journey into Brittany, by shortening it. My son and his wife are charmed with my remaining here till Lent. I then purpose to go to Rennes, out of complaisance to them, and because Lent is a more melancholy time in the country than winter; but as things may change, we must not look so far

forward. It is certain that the air here is very good, and you wrong it to think otherwise. We have had the finest weather in the world for these two months past, hot in the dog-days, a charming September, none of your violent north winds which make Canaples and your Castle tremble. I hope, however, to tremble there as well as the rest.

I know not how our deputation stands; my son says that his ill luck has killed the Pope, to deprive us of M. de Chaulnes; and though the Duc, upon his retiring from the King's private sanctum, said to M. de Lavardin, who was to hold the States, "Sir, I beg that M. de Sévigné may have the deputation," the same ill luck prevails; for M. de Lavardin is not to hold them, but Maréchal d'Estrées. M. de Lavardin was delighted at having this commission, and an opportunity of obliging my son; it is very probable that M. de Chaulnes had apprised the King of it, as he spoke so freely to M. de Lavardin. But the Maréchal wrote to His Majesty to complain that he was deprived of the principal function of his command, which was even specified in his commission. The King told M. de Croissi, that his intention was not to have included in it the States; M. de Croissi acknowledged that he had made no distinction: the King seemed angry, but finding the Maréchal was not in the wrong, he said, "The Maréchal then must be informed that he is to hold them, and M. de Lavardin must be told that he cannot." The latter, like a good courtier, submitted with respect to his master's will. This is what Madame de Lavardin informs me, accompanied with a thousand friendly expressions, and regrets that her son has it not in his power to serve mine. Madame de La Fayette, however, has sent me a letter for Maréchal d'Estrées, in which she entreats him, with all the earnestness possible, to give this deputation to my son, of whom she says many kind things: she adds, that her friendship for me makes her take as great an interest in this affair, as if she pleaded for her own son. I have accompanied this letter with another, and so has Sévigné: we shall see what all these engines will produce. Madame de La Fayette tells me, that Madame de Chaulnes

is far from being dormant upon this occasion; so that I imagine, if M. de Chaulnes has obtained the King's approbation of his choice in favour of my son, the good Duchesse will prevail upon M. de Croissi to write to Maréchal d'Estrées, and it will be finished. This is a long harangue, your friendship exposes you to such tremendous details: I have not had time to shorten it, as a great wit says [1]; but as you wish to know everything, such is the state of affairs with us, and we are more resigned to Providence in these matters than you can possibly imagine. This is not the case with regard to your loss of Avignon, and your fine county; what a delightful residence! how pleasant to pass the winter there! what a blessing was this income, which you so properly applied! what a loss! what a misreckoning! I am sorely grieved at it; *my genius* will often complain to the good Duc de Chaulnes, in proportion as he accommodates matters, and thereby deprives you of Avignon. Nothing is so strange as this sudden change of climate, which makes him take a leap from Auray to within two leagues of Grignan; for he is upon your Rhône, from thence he goes to Rome, and will certainly not return from that city without visiting you; nothing less can console him for the interruption of his intercourse with the amiable *genius*. Nothing more clearly proves that people must meet; it is now your turn to tell me some news of M. de Chaulnes. I must say a word or two of my dear Pauline; was I not right in my predictions, that the desire of pleasing you would make her amiable? She should not be driven roughly, you find how gentleness operates upon her mind; it gives me real joy, as well upon her account as yours, for you cannot but love this little child, who will be an agreeable companion for you. Adieu, my child; I love you for many reasons, but particularly, because you love me; this is a very cogent one, and one that will not loose its prey.

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[1] At the end of the sixteenth of the *Lettres Provinciales*, Pascal says: "I have only made this longer than the rest, because I have not had time to shorten it."

LETTER 925

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, September 7, 1689.

Madame de La Fayette has written again to Maréchal d'Estrées, to desire him not to engage himself, telling him, these are not mere words of course; that she is more solicitous to obtain for us what she requests of him than if it were for her own son; and that every measure was taken at Court to crown the business in question with success: she acts according to the advice of Madame de Chaulnes this second time. Nothing can equal the good Duchesse's friendship for me, nor the pains she takes to oblige me; she is a true and active friend. Madame de La Fayette is delighted with her conduct, Madame de Lavardin cordially unites her forces; so that I can do nothing but thank these three people. I will acquaint you with the event.

I am convinced that you have had, at least, one letter from M. de Chaulnes: he flies as swiftly as a bird. His Majesty gave him fifty thousand livres for this purpose: I heartily wish you had as much to console you for the death of the Pope. Our fleet has returned peaceably to Belle-Isle, and M. de Seignelai has flown back to Versailles; for he is a bird too, but of smaller size than the Duc de Chaulnes. You find that our wit was in the right, in saying there had been no sea-fights since the battle of Actium. Maréchal d'Humières should not have endeavoured to take Walcourt at the first onset [1]; if these gentlemen are not successful, the world is very apt to condemn their conduct. It is said the Maréchal's lady gives out that the friends her husband has lost upon this occasion, prevent her from enjoying *his victory*. M. de Boufflers has performed a brilliant action [2]; I believe our Marquis was concerned; he is very well,

[1] Maréchal d'Humières wishing to force the post of Walcourt, on the 27th August, lost many men, and was obliged to retire.

[2] The Marquis de Boufflers attacked Kocheim on the Moselle, August 26, and carried it by assault.

so that we have nothing to do but to thank God. What emotion I feel, when I hear the name of M. de Boufflers! M. de Revel is here with two beauties from Rennes, one of whom he is said to be in love with: this woman understands raillery, I do not believe she is in earnest with our passing hero: it is a great amusement to us; they will stay here three or four days. I do not love dealing in contraband goods; but if I chose, I believe I could be useful in the conversation. The poor Marquise de Marbeuf is laid up at Rennes with a violent cold; for my part, my health is so good, that I am sometimes astonished at it; I have none of the little aches or pains that are so common; I seem to be too fortunate in this respect, and I receive it at the hand of Providence in the same manner as I should the contrary, were it so ordained. And are you, my child, no longer troubled with those nervous affections, headaches, and pains in your legs? is your beautiful machine in good order? Madame de Coulanges informs me that she has repaired hers by bathing; she is going back to Brevannes with a love for solitude, which even she herself is at a loss to comprehend; she complains that you have been the first to break off a correspondence that gave her so much pleasure; nothing can afford her comfort in this respect, but the hope of your renewing it when you are together, for she has observed, with grief, that your return will absolutely destroy this correspondence, which always afflicts her; in short, she is all politeness.

A great event has taken place. The Comte de Revel set out this morning at day-break; he remained here only one day. The ladies are astonished, and will now find the time hang heavy on their hands. He gave my son serious reasons for his precipitancy; he said he was not willing to mortify a certain lady; this made us laugh: generally speaking, women are strange creatures, as M. de Rochefoucauld well knew.

Adieu, my best and dearest child: it is supposed that our Parliament will return to Rennes, and no doubt that of Guyenne to Bordeaux: traffic and barter are always

uppermost; money does everything. I must kiss Pauline, and rejoice that she is worthy of your love.

LETTER 926

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, September 11, 1689.

If I had been with you the day you wrote to me, or my *genius* had been at Grignan as yours was at Auray, I would have said to you, "Daughter, you are jesting, to expect M. de Chaulnes to-day or to-morrow: he is still at Paris, and will not set out till the twenty-eighth, so that he cannot be with you till the third of September:" but my *genius* does not travel like yours; and our good Duc, who so well knew how to converse with, and answer it, would not take the same care of mine. I own, I should be charmed at your seeing him: and how droll a circumstance it would have been, if you had received in his presence letters written by me from Brittany when I was in his house, and in which I speak of him! for he has long been the principal subject of my letters. In short, my dear, we shall see what will happen from his passing so near you: I cannot help thinking there will be at least some little *Coulanges,* some letter, some compliment, some notice, or some remembrance. The good Duchesse always says: "As to the beautiful Comtesse, M. de Chaulnes loves her dearly; he esteems her, and is quite happy when he is with her." We shall see what this will produce: I sincerely wish that the interest he took in my son, by desiring M. de Lavardin to give him the deputation, may be approved by His Majesty; for as to Maréchal d'Estrées, he certainly will not refuse Madame de La Fayette. Do you not wonder at this sudden and surprising change, which seems exactly calculated to derange all our plans? We cannot yet comprehend how the Duc could have spoken in the way he did to M. de Lavardin, if he had not said a word to the King;

but this is still a mystery. We have written to Madame de La Fayette, that we thought it natural for M. de Lavardin to inform His Majesty of what M. de Chaulnes has said to him, when he believed M. de Lavardin was to hold the States; that M. de Revel thought the same, and that we sent the idea to her for improvement. I am convinced that Madame de Chaulnes will do all in her power; so that I sleep, and leave this to be unravelled you know where.

I am not quite so easy with respect to our poor Marquis; the army is everywhere so much in motion, that we may believe the flying camp of Boufflers will not remain inactive. They performed a very brilliant action, while Maréchal d'Humières suffered himself to be beaten at Walcourt. This monkey [1] to enter sword in hand, force the Castle, and kill or carry off eleven or twelve hundred men! Figure to yourself this infant become a man, a soldier, a firebrand; my child, there would be no supporting these reflections, if we did not at the same time consider, that God will preserve him; and that he whom He protects is well protected. Indeed, you are right in saying, I am neither indifferent to this child, nor to your affairs; I not only interest myself, and take my part in them, but I am over head and ears in them; and how can it be otherwise? This it is that occupies me, that sets me in motion, and makes me sensible that I am still too much alive.

Corbinelli has been quite kneaded into mysticism for more than a year; I am in the secret; all the outworks of the place are so invested, that he can endure no other reading. He has got a Malaval [2] that delights him; he has found out that my grandmother, and the love of God of my *grandfather* St. François de Sales, were as spiritual as St. Thérèse. He has extracted from all these books five hundred beautiful maxims; he every day visits Madame

[1] The Marquis de Grignan.

[2] François Malaval, author of several works added to the *Index* at Rome, as suspected of being too spiritually refined. The article on Malaval in Moréri's *Historical Dictionary*, is a very curious one. Who would believe that a man blind from the age of nine months, should attain so much erudition and knowledge as is ascribed to him?

Le Maigre, a very pretty woman; nothing is spoken of but God, Christian morality, the Evangelist of the day; these are called holy conversations, they charm him, and he shines in them; he is insensible to everything else. He, however, answers M. de Soissons [1] a little in behalf of M. Descartes: he shows all he does to Madame de Coulanges, who is very much pleased with it: several Cartesians desire him to continue, but he will not: you know him well; he burns everything he has scribbled; always full of others and destitute of himself, his self-love is akin to their pride, and he gives no offence; I am not surprised that the Lieutenant of Police is pleased with him. I know not whether he had a hand in that marriage [2], but it is broken off; the mother is inconsolable: the father does not care about it, he says, and the daughter shows great indifference on this unpleasant occasion. Corbinelli does not write to me, he has no time; I know not what I would not give to see the body of the place as well taken as the outworks, and to see how real devotion would operate upon so lively and extensive an understanding; if I were worthy of asking such a favour of God, I would do it with all my heart.

You talk to me of M. de Beauvilliers, and M. de Fénélon, and of the propriety of the choice that has been made of them. As I have already told you, they are both excellent. I congratulate the Chevalier most sincerely upon the occasion; M. de Beauvilliers is very worthy of being his friend.

I informed you of the negotiations that were carrying on for the return of the Parliament. My son has taken a trip to Rennes, to visit M. de Pommereuil's son, who has arrived from Alençon, of which place he is Controller; his lovely wife is with him: she would set all Rennes on fire, if she were to remain here four days. Our ladies are still here three days after the departure of the faithless and perfidi-

[1] Pierre-Daniel Huet, Bishop of Soissons, and afterwards of Avranches, wrote against the philosophy of Descartes.

[2] The marriage of Madame Le Camus with M. de Soissons, which did not take place. In 1690 she married M. de Nicolaï, first President of the Chamber of Accounts at Paris.

ous M. de Revel; this was an event that gave no pleasure, though they pretend not to care about it. The weather today is dreadful; it seems as if winter were already disposed to take place. I think, by way of drying myself, of your fine sunshine at Avignon. Ah, good heavens! tell it not in Gath; it is the Duc who will deprive you of this beautiful county, he deserves to be scolded; I dare not think of the revenue you derived from it, nor what you will do without this resource. Be careful of yourself, my dear child; let me hope to see you again in good health; mine continues excellent. My daughter-in-law desires to be remembered to you affectionately; we have been alone, we have taken courage, and we are now very well able to bear my son's absence.

LETTER 927

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, September 14, 1689.

I am always unhappy when any of your letters miscarry; it makes me lose the thread of a conversation that was perfectly connected, and which constitutes my happiness and my amusement. When we belong to a society, as I do to that of Grignan, are interested in it, and attentive to it, the loss of a letter is not a trifle; but what is to be done in this case? arm ourselves with patience, endure these lesser evils that are attached to greater, and endeavour, if it pleases God, to see one another again, and not adopt such violent measures as little Rochebonne[1]; "we must separate, and never love again:" this is a violent little fellow, who can bear nothing. For my part, I shall say, "we must always love one another, though we should be obliged to separate:" I like the idea you have given me of that dear child.

But let us talk of our good Duc de Chaulnes. So then he has called at Grignan. Your Castle has an air of

[1] M. de Châteauneuf de Rochebonne, nephew of M. de Grignan, killed September 11, 1709, at the battle of Malplaquet.

such grandeur; it is so well furnished, your chapter is so noble, your terraces so proud and so superior to all others, that the Duc will easily comprehend that Boreas is not always in a humour to suffer these heights, which seem to brave and defy him. You must inform me of what passed at this visit; I am persuaded that you must have had Coulanges and the truant Capuchin [1] with you. I wish the latter could cure the colic. How, my child, is this? M. de Grignan, who never was afflicted with this complaint, to be thus disordered by it! but we have no choice, and we must submit. God has not yet pointed out to me the path of my decay; I expect it with a resignation that will make me endure it patiently, for the one seldom comes without the other. I am sure you have received the Duc in the most courteous and hospitable manner, notwithstanding the ill office he is going to render you. I dare say he did not amuse himself with answering *my genius,* as he conferred with yours in Lower Brittany; he must have had too much pleasure in conversing with you personally, and too much business; this, in my opinion, is the most desirable part of his Embassy. You must have mentioned your poor mamma, and he must have explained to you what he has done for our deputation; you will be astonished that we know nothing respecting it; after what he said to M. de Lavardin to desire him to give the deputation to M. de Sévigné, a silence has taken place, which I cannot comprehend. But as it is the Duc's business to name the deputy, I have no reason to doubt his good-will hitherto, and still less the friendly zeal of Madame de Chaulnes; on the contrary, I have reason to be convinced of it. The Parliament is sent back to Rennes [2]; this gives incredible joy; the city furnishes the King with fifty thousand livres. M. de Coëtlogon [3] has been canvassing in this affair, and I am per-

[1] The physician M. de Chaulnes took with him, and one of the two Capuchins of the Louvre whom Madame de Sévigné often mentions in her Letters.

[2] The Parliament of Rennes had been moved to Vannes in 1675, on account of a sedition that happened that year at Rennes.

[3] René-Hyacinthe, Marquis de Coëtlogon, was Governor of Rennes,

suaded that it is he who has thrown the stumbling-blocks in our way through M. de Cavoie: I have nothing to say, and therefore say nothing, except that we are unfortunate, owing to the death of a Pope, at a stated period; the complaints of Maréchal d'Estrées, which prevented M. de Lavardin from holding the States, as he would otherwise have done; the return of the Parliament at this juncture, and a present of fifty thousand livres: this succession and concatenation of unforeseen events, have produced what you view in the same light that I do. But, my dear child, be not more grieved than we are: we have still some fortitude left, these things do not affect the heart. Maréchal d'Estrées refers me to Madame de La Fayette, to learn his sentiments; we shall at length know the sequel, and the curious unravelling of this intrigue. My son will console himself with the resolution he has taken of excusing himself from the *arrière-ban,* which he was obliged to accept, by proving the expense he incurred at the head of the nobility. I have already gone too far; I cannot help wondering at the swiftness of my pen, which goes farther than I intend it should.

According to the idea I have formed to myself of Pauline's person and understanding, I think she must be very striking and interesting, and a thousand times more so than beauties who have not these attractions. I also imagine that the Duc considered her as she is, and you, my child, as you are; I am not uneasy about your beauty, while you preserve your health. I have told Madame de La Fayette that her son should shudder at marrying Mademoiselle de Marillac, with whom our Marquis was in love: this marriage is highly approved, it is a good family, the alliance is desirable, and all the Lamoignons have two hundred thousand livres for ever. Madame de La Fayette insures them all her property, reserving only the use and profits; is not this enough? she is very well satisfied; the marriage will not take place till the end of the campaign.

and brother-in-law of Louis d'Oger, Marquis de Cavoie, Grand Maréchal of the King's household.

M. d'Arles has written me a very loving letter; he is pleased with Forges; he informs me that Madame de Vins has gained her cause, and I have written to him to congratulate her upon the occasion. My son sends his kindest remembrances to you, and desires me to tell you what I have already told you; he saw M. de Pommereuil's beautiful daughter-in-law at Rennes; she stammers so much as to be unable to utter a sentence distinctly; but we must say with Molière, "Where is the foolish husband who would be sorry that his wife was dumb [1]?" In good truth, I neither stammer nor am dumb; this is a misfortune for you. I must tell you once more, that I am sorry your farmers begin to pay as badly as ours do; this, joined to the loss of Avignon,—*But let us not talk of this,* nor of the ravages committed by time upon our poor persons, and at length upon our lives. I ought to conclude in a less gloomy strain, but I know not what to say; *dixi.*

LETTER 928

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, September 18, 1689.

Your letter of the first of September is at length arrived, after having travelled to Rennes; this is a journey my letters sometimes take, by being put into the wrong bag: how is this to be redressed? but here it is; I should have been very sorry to have lost it; it carries on a chain of conversation, which informs me of everything that had escaped me. Let us pass over the account of the good Duc de Chaulnes's visit; of the magnificent and friendly reception you gave him; the elegance of your house; excellent fare; two tables, like his in Brittany, sumptuously served; a noble company, without the presence of Boreas; he would have stunned you, you would not have been able to hear each other speak, and besides you had guests enough with-

[1] See Act II. *Scene IV.* of the *Médecin malgré lui.*

out him. Flame seems to know his business well; no confusion, and great taste: I figure all this to myself, with greater pleasure than I can possibly express to you. I wished you to be seen in all your glory, at least your country glory, for that of Aix is still greater; and that M. de Chaulnes should find something better to eat than our chicken and bacon. He now knows what you can do; you have shown enough to do as you please at Paris; he has seen your fish and flesh repasts, the mutton-pasty, and the pigeon-pie. Coulanges played his part also very well, his spirits are not yet lowered. I dread this change in him; for gaiety constitutes a great part of his merit. I have no doubt that his heart overflowed with joy at so handsome a reception, and that he was in raptures at Pauline's perfections. You always accuse her of not being agreeable, except with Ducs and Peers: I have, however, seen her very entertaining only with us; and you gave me an account, when I was here five years ago, of some very amusing suppers. M. de Chaulnes has written to me; enclosed is his letter: you will see whether he is satisfied with you all, and the manner in which you do the honours of your house. He made you laugh at the *genius*; mine did not make its appearance at Grignan, better company was to be found: you knew nearly what it would have said, and you have done too much honour to my memory; you have mentioned me several times, and drank my health. Coulanges climbed upon his chair; this, I think, was a dangerous attempt for a little man, as round as a bowl, and not very alert. I am glad he did not meet with a fall in solemnizing my health, and am very anxious for a letter from him. The dinner, which you ordered to rise at La Flame's wand, in *Noah's Ark,* which you describe so pleasantly, must have been both elegant and enchanting. The music was quite new; it must have brought to mind the *ménagerie* at Versailles. In short, you are very generous, as you say, to give such a reception to an Ambassador who is going to do you so much harm; I am convinced that he is very sorry for it. Madame de Chaulnes tells me that it is thought many diffi-

culties will be started in the Conclave, and afterwards upon the cruel affair of the franchises; so much the better, say I:

Rome sera, du moins un peu plus tard rendue [1].

That county, that charming Avignon, will remain to us, whilst the Holy Ghost is choosing a Pope, and the negotiations continue. You are right, my child; it is like the day you were at the ball at the Louvre, brilliant with jewels which you were to return the next day: but what you retained was better; and you were handsomer on the next day, than from all appearances your income will be. I say on this subject, as you do, in your Funeral Orations, "Tell it not in Gath." Indeed, there was no appearance of it at Grignan, when you received His Excellency: I know not how you contrive it, or how people can run without legs; it is a miracle, which I pray God may always continue. The Duchesse de Chaulnes sent me the letter you wrote to her; no one can say what is necessary, and no more, so well as you; every thought seems placed in its proper niche. In short, what shall I say to you? I share in all you do; self-love, friendship, and gratitude, all are satisfied. I suppose that your brothers did not set out till they had assisted you in doing the honours of your house. I shall say nothing to you respecting the deputation; everything relating to it, has been too slow and too long in hand; we will talk of it another time.

Your dear son is well; you know that he was every where, sword in hand, with M. de Boufflers: this little monkey, my dear child! *God preserve him,* I shall never alter my prayer. Mayence has surrendered [2]: this news has sur-

[1] Rome will, at least, be surrendered somewhat later. [Translation.]

[2] Mayence surrendered at the end of seven weeks, for want of powder. M. d'Uxelles had made twenty-two sallies, in which he had killed five thousand of the enemy's men. But his noble defence was very unfavourably judged at Paris; "this immense city," said Voltaire, "full of indolent people, who must judge of everything, and who have ears and tongues, but no eyes." M. d'Uxelles was hooted at there in a crowded theatre. But Louis XIV. received him well; it is affirmed that he said to him, "You defended yourself like a man of courage, and surrendered like a man of sense." What in some degree excused the injustice of the public, was, that this officer was the devoted creature

prised us; we were so easy respecting this siege, that I always laughed at M. de Lorraine. It is said that the Marquis d'Uxelles has retired with the esteem of friends and foes. I tremble lest the dean's brother should be among the number of killed or wounded; none of his brave brothers will attain grey hairs: of this he is convinced at least, if we may judge by the hasty careless manner in which he listened to M. Prat; he is accustomed to such news. I am in pain for poor Martillac: what can be done with one leg, in a city taken by assault[1]? what noise, what confusion, what an infernal region! I am very uneasy. I pity M. de La Trousse; we said truly, in seeing him repair his house: "The worst that can happen to him, is to enjoy the expense he is incurring there:" this was indeed too true.

Do you wish to know what sort of life we lead, my dear child? I will describe it to you. We rise at eight; go to mass at nine; walk or not, according to the weather, sometimes different ways; we dine comfortably; a neighbour arrives, we talk of the news; after dinner we work, my daughter-in-law upon a hundred different things, I upon two pieces of tapestry which Madame de Kerman gave me at Chaulnes; at five we separate, and walk alone or together; meet at a very pretty spot; I either take a book, pray, or think of my child, build castles in the air, and am sometimes cheerful, and sometimes melancholy. My son reads entertaining and good books; we have some devotional, and some historical; this amuses and employs us, we make our remarks upon what we read; my son is indefatigable, he would read for five hours successively if we would permit him. We receive letters and answer them, which occupies no small portion of our time, at least of mine. We have had company, and we shall have more,

of Louvois; and as he surrendered Mayence at the moment it was going to be reinforced, he was suspected of having done so, to favour the Minister; for the latter, daily perceiving the King's aversion to him, feared, it is said, every decisive event, which, by effecting a peace, would have rendered him less necessary.

[1] Madame de Sévigné was not ignorant that Mayence had capitulated; but she meant to speak of the attack of the covered way, which was very vigorous and bloody.

though we do not wish it; when visitors arrive, we make ourselves perfectly easy. My son has workmen who are dressing trees as they say here, and gravelling the partere. In short, my child, it is a strange thing, that in pursuing this insipid, and in some degree, melancholy life, the days should glide and fly from us; God knows what is flying from us at the same time; but *tell it not in Gath*; I cannot, however, help thinking of it. We sup at eight; Sévigné reads after supper, but only books of amusement, for fear of falling asleep; they retire at ten, but I seldom go to bed till twelve; such nearly are the rules of our convent; over the door is inscribed, *Sacred liberty,* or, *Do as you please* [1]. I infinitely prefer this life to that at Rennes; it will be sufficient to pass Lent there, for the benefit of soul and body.

Du Plessis has written me word, that his whim has only yet displayed the end of its nose; that it is not fully come forth; but that he is married to a person perfectly suited to his taste, of sense and beauty, of a good family, and who has secured him from all future want; this is what you make me doubt: he seems still, however, to listen to Madame de Vins. In short, these are his words, "I love this wife a great deal better than the last;" this agrees with the grief he displayed at her loss: have you forgotten it?

LETTER 929

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, September 21, 1689.

Not only do I read your letters with pleasure, but I read them over again with an affection that interests me, and gives a relish to my solitary walks; these letters have greater charms, and are better written, than you imagine; you are not aware of the turn and harmony you give to them. I must tell you, my dear Comtesse, that M. de

[1] This is what Rabelais says of the Abbey de Thélème. They had this single rule: "*Fais ce que tu voudras*"—in English, "Do as you please."

Chaulnes, after so many professions of friendship, has forgotten us a little at Paris. He received your letter at Versailles; it was calculated to rouse him; nevertheless, in a week's residence there, and three conferences with the King, he could not find one moment to say a word in favour of my son, not even to M. de Croissi; he was contented with saying to M. de Lavardin, who was to have held the States; "Sir, I entreat you to appoint M. de Sévigné deputy." And the next day, upon Maréchal d'Estrées's remonstrances, an alteration took place; so that these words were lost in air. Madame de Chaulnes is to speak about it to M. de Croissi, but it will certainly be too late; they are people who are not dormant, and this is our situation. If the business depended upon Maréchal d'Estrées, it would be very certain: Madame de La Fayette has written him two very forcible letters; he only requires at this moment of interregnum, to discover what would be agreeable at Court, and he himself points out the way to Madame de La Fayette, who on her part impels the Duchesse, and places the Abbé Têtu between her and M. de Croissi: she certainly does wonders, and we wait the effect of her exertions with tolerable tranquillity, with regard to the object itself, but hurt at the coldness and silence of the Duc, whose friendship for me and my son, whose views, advice, manners, all convinced us, and the whole Province, that he considered us with peculiar distinction. This, between you and me, so greatly afflicts and surprises us, that comparing what has passed since their departure, with what passed before, we lose our senses, and can in no way account for this sad difference; we think it all a dream, one of those disagreeable dreams from which we are delighted to awake, to discover that it was an illusion. We will inform you of the sequel; but be assured that we are highly pleased with the Maréchal: he has even written to us, without saying so much to Madame de La Fayette, in the most obliging manner possible. As to M. de Lavardin, it must be owned that the holding the States would have been a very pretty appointment for him; but this was taking the finest feather out of

the Maréchal's cap: His Majesty may compensate M. de Lavardin when he pleases.

What say you to Mayence? The Marquis d'Uxelles was in want of powder and muskets; it seemed to us likewise that they were somewhat tardy in sending reinforcements: in short, it was the will of God, as it is that your son should be in perfect health. The dear Marquis has written me a very pretty letter; he rallies with me, and calls my daughter-in-law *his cousin*; he says they have done nothing yet, but highly praises M. de Boufflers; in short, no one can answer better to the fire of courage and valour than he does. *God preserve him.* Coulanges appears to me delighted with your magnificence, your entertainments, your good taste, and with Pauline: you are wicked, you think he is compelled by virtue of witchcraft; I believe him; but without being Ducs, you display more splendour than is necessary to enchant him. Your company was select, and your Court perfectly genteel; nothing could add to the grandeur of this reception.

M. Rousseau is mad with his Madame de La Rivière, whom he makes a constellation; it is one of their dreams ordinary and extraordinary, to which they give so much credit, that they have been almost bewildered by them; for they took all the phantoms of their imagination for serious truths. But I am not dreaming when I tell you, that one of my letters is either lost or missent. I did not wait from the seventeenth to the twenty-fourth to write to my dear child; I wrote to you from hence, where I arrived with Madame de Chaulnes and M. de Revel: she set out on Saturday the twentieth, at four in the morning, and I wrote to you the next day, August the twenty-first. It is only to scold the postman, that I am so exact; I do not, however, complain, as I receive your letters very regularly. You praise Revel for the same reason I did, in saying that I had found him a man of veracity, and so little tinctured with vanity, that after having related to me the passages of the Rhine and Senef, and other circumstances of his campaigns, I did not know whether he deserved praise or cens-

ure. He told us that at first he fell into the Rhine, and was dragged out by his hair; that his horse sunk into a hole; in short, he related all this in such a manner, that I concluded he was drowned; it seems, however, that he mounted very expeditiously, though dripping wet, upon another horse, and went very prettily to charge the enemy, and disengage the Prince, who had just been wounded [1]. I was, nevertheless, in great want of this decision from the Higher Council, which the Chevalier sends me, for his is really so to me. I am obliged to say, to complete Revel's panegyric, that he did not speak so carelessly of the battle of Altenheim [2], and of the reputation of the Chevalier.

Monsieur DE SÉVIGNÉ *also writes to his Sister.*
(Enclosed in his Mother's letter.)

I had, however, assured my mother, that no one could be more esteemed for valour and even probity than Revel; but this was only a trifling sentence, from an inferior judge, in comparison to the decision of Council, which has just been delivered by the Knight of Glory. Now we are upon the subject of Revel, I will give you a little anecdote, which will appear *fuor di proposito* (inapplicable). I once saw La R**** [3] at Madame de Louvois's playing at *basset*; she lost considerably; at length, piqued at her ill luck, she made an alpion [4], saying these beautiful words, "If I lose this alpion, I will say the most disgraceful thing of myself that can possibly be uttered." She lost it, and to keep her word, she told the company that she had that very morning taken a clyster that had been brought her the preceding evening, from pure avarice, not being willing to incur an

[1] The Comte de Revel commanded the cuirassiers at the passage of the Rhine, June 12, 1672.

[2] The Chevalier de Grignan had greatly distinguished himself at the battle of Altenheim, which happened August 2, 1675.

[3] The same mentioned by M. de Revel, in the Letter 921, of 24th August, 1689, in the sixth volume. Those who wish to know who is meant by this initial, may choose between Madame de Rambures and Madame de Royan, two persons of such distinguished rank, and such ill manners, that we risk little in giving them credit for everything of this kind we may think proper.

[4] A term in *basset,* synonymous to that of paroli at pharo.

unnecessary expense. This is the anecdote: now, my dear little sister, for the application. I am piqued at having lost the deputation, which I was led to expect, whether I would or not; and, in revenge, I am going to tell you a disgraceful thing of myself, more so than La R****'s. It is this; notwithstanding all my fine reflections, and the philosophy which solitude and retirement inspire, I have felt so much nettled at M. de Chaulnes' neglect and indolence, at the disgust this creates in the Province, and the joy with which it has inspired M. de Chaulnes's enemies, and those who hate me on his account, that it is with the greatest difficulty in the world, I have got the better of it. I have therefore carefully avoided everything that could recall my thoughts to it; and as your letters were filled with the most friendly sentiments towards me, and the interest you took in this little distinction, I would rather have suffered death than have read them; they were poison to my mind. Can I, my dear little sister, give you a greater proof of confidence, than in relating to you such a feeling, after six years of reflection, and good sense? But tell me, at the same time, if there can be a comparison between the friendship and zeal, evinced by M. de Chaulnes for two years, to do us this service, and the uncommon lethargy he displays at present, and the profound silence he observes, after so many solemn asservations, that the only pleasure he had in leaving Brittany, was in going to put the finishing stroke to this affair. How could he approach you after this? how could he write to my mother? how, in short, can he justify himself for having failed in one of the most essential duties of friendship? Could it ever have been supposed that M. and Madame de Chaulnes would have become useless to us with regard to the deputation of Brittany; and that Madame de La Fayette and Maréchal d'Estrées should be the only persons that would have procured it for us, had measures been taken in time? I begin to give up all thoughts of it; and now that all hope is at at an end, I find myself like the man of Dijon, whose story M. de Ormesson has often related to us: he was upon the wheel;

he said to his confessor; "Sir, my mind has not been so composed for a long time." It is certain that I am much more tranquil than I was a month ago, when I expected letters from M. de Chaulnes by every post; my mother will acquaint you with my sentiments upon this subject. I am persuaded that it is love who has played us this trick; and this is the only apology that can be offered for such conduct, for who does not know that everything should yield to the power of love? It is only to be lamented that we may attribute it to that little fretful sneerer, du Bois de La Roche. I already know where in future to meet with more consolation than at *The Rocks*; I mean with you and M. de Grignan in your magnificent Castle; if God preserve the health of all the Grignans, and if nothing change upon this score either, in my own house or Madame de Mauron's, I can foresee nothing to prevent my visiting you at Grignan, under pretence of going to take the waters; but, in fact, to avoid the *arrière-ban,* from which I could not excuse myself this year, on account of the way in which it was offered to me, and because M. de Chaulnes advised me to accept of it, in the views he assured me he had for me. In all human probability therefore, it will be towards the spring, or rather towards the summer, when I shall see you, my dearest sister. My only fear is, that M. de Grignan may at that time be obliged to visit the coast, and that I shall not have so much of his company as I wish. I am delighted that Pauline begins to make conquests; little Coulanges seems to praise her most heartily and sincerely. Your son tells me very prettily, that after having been at the taking of three or four cities, he has a great inclination to expose himself to the air of *The Rocks.* Adieu, my lovely little sister; I salute and embrace all the illustrious Grignans, without forgetting M. de La Garde.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *continues and concludes her letter to her Daughter.*

All this must have vent: it is a relief to him. You may well suppose that if I see him set out for Bourbon and

Grignan, I shall request a place in his carriage. It will be found, in the end, that I, who do not keep a philosopher's shop, have more philosophy than all of them. Providence assists me wonderfully upon these occasions; it was by submitting to its decrees, that Mademoiselle Le Camus heroically endured the breaking off of her marriage; I am inclined to think, that the Cardinal (Le Camus [1]) did not bear the shock with so much fortitude. I fancy His Eminence seeks only the road to paradise, and that he will not desert the *Christian mob.* I cannot believe that people of really good sense can carry on the farce long; it is assuming too much. I feel the mortification of this family. It is still believed that the affair of the Parliament of Rennes is determined.

LETTER 930

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, September 25, 1689.

I reconcile myself very badly to the restraint laid upon me by M. de Grignan; he keeps a constant watch over my actions; he is afraid I shall give him a father-in-law: this captivity will drive me to some rash adventure, but it will not be with *monsieur* le Comte de Revel: yes, *monsieur,* for he is not only *monsieur,* but *monsieur le comte* de Revel; we are quite unacquainted here with the custom of giving a title to a person who has no right to it [2]; we nevertheless sometimes forget ourselves, and call him *Revel,* but this is under the rose. I will not marry him, so make yourself easy, he is too gallant; this will excite your curiosity to know who are his *Chimènes*: you mention two who are true Bretonnes, but there are three others; a young *sénéchale* who was here, but not related to the one you have seen; Mademoiselle de K****, who is very pretty, and who was

[1] A prelate who piqued himself so much upon his high birth, that preaching one day to the people of his diocese, he styled them the *Christian mob.*

[2] M. de Coulanges said that the children of the members of the Parliament of Rennes were all born Marquises and Comtes.

at Rennes; and to crown all, a little Madame de M. C**** *your niece,* for she is grand-daughter of *your father* Descartes; she has a great deal of wit, and seems to think that fire is hot, and that she may burn and be burned. All this, however, is carried on with so much decency, that their common lover seems heartily tired of Rennes; he told M. de Louvois the other day, that if he wanted the most steady officer in the world for a winter campaign, he would think of him.

Let us now, my child, talk of the Chevalier's prejudice; does friendship blind us so far? I think I am as well acquainted with it as anyone, but it should seem to me that it would never err against conviction; we do not love those less who are in the wrong, but we perceive their error. What! shall an unknown personage, called Reason, supported by Truth, knock at the door, and shall she be driven away, as from the University of Paris, (you have seen that charming work of Despréaux [1]), without being heard, though accompanied by justification? What! do two and two no longer make four? A gratification given by Maréchal de La Meilleraie, of a hundred crowns every two years, which was never a settled pension, and which was not known, cannot be discontinued without a crime; for they say, "Sir, we must see at the next meeting of the States; if I am deceived, it will be easily rectified." For, with regard to the late gratification erased and given to the States of seventy-one, Coëtlogon does not disagree to it. Is it possible to be in the wrong, when all these things are so clearly proved? If the Chevalier had so good a cause in hand, with that warm blood that creates heroes and the gout, he would know how to support it better than I do. But can a person with so much good sense, shut his eyes and his judgment to this poor truth? No, surely, my dear Comtesse, no surely; the Duc de Chaulnes was not to blame here; this is his master-piece of friendship; here he fulfilled

[1] See the burlesque decision given in the high chamber of Parnassus, in favour of the masters of arts, for the support of the doctrine of Aristotle.

all its duties, and even surpassed them; it is with regard to us that he was to blame, and his conduct is wholly incomprehensible: such is the miserable state of man; everything is cut diamond-wise, everything is true, and this is the world. The good Duc has written to me again from Toulon; he is constantly thinking of me, without having once thought of me for a single moment during a week's stay at Paris: not one word to the King respecting the deputation so often promised, in a manner which gave us reason to think he would make it his own business; not a word to M. de Croissi, whose son he took with him, and who would have appointed your brother; he said a flying word to M. de Lavardin, but could he suppose that he had more power than himself to create a deputy? We had persuaded ourselves that this was after he had mentioned it to the King. At length he sets out, he learns that Lavardin is not to hold the States, it was therefore necessary to write. He goes to Grignan, you talk to him on the subject, he seems to be inclined to write, and this is all; he writes to me from Grignan and Toulon, but says not a syllable respecting it. Madame de Chaulnes is to speak to M. de Croissi about it, but it will be too late, the place will be taken by M. de Coëtlogon. As to Maréchal d'Estrées, he has joyfully engaged himself to Madame de La Fayette, provided the Court leaves him master of the nomination: we were but too happy on this quarter; but we think no more of it: M. de Cavoie will have the deputation for his brother-in-law, and will be in the right. The good Duchesse has lost too much time; she is timid, and will find the passage blocked up; it is not everyone who knows how to speak. I know not how to reconcile this lethargic conduct with a friendship I cannot doubt; I am as much at a loss to comprehend it as my son; but we are resolved to have the glory of not complaining; this would give the Duc's enemies too much pleasure, and serve them for a triumph. We are enclosed in these woods, and it is easy for us to be silent; changes may take place in another year, so that we are very well pleased you gave him such a mag-

nificent reception: we shall not discontinue our correspondence with him; I shall only state the fact, and ask *His Excellency* how he could constantly think of us, and yet forget both us and himself? We shall not go to the meeting of the States, and shall laugh at the *arrière-ban,* which has given us nothing but uneasiness. These are our wise resolutions; if you approve them, we shall think them still better. We are, however, sensible to the loss you will sustain in your charming county; we cannot too much regret so many fine and good things which flowed from it. I feel this blow as much as you, and perhaps more; for you are sublime, and I am not so.

Apropos of sublime: it seems to me that M. de Marillac [1] does not act amiss. La Fayette is handsome, and has no bad qualities: he has a good name, he is in the path of glory, and has all his mother's friends, who are infinite in number; his mother is a woman of distinguished merit; she entails all her estate upon him, as does also the Abbé [2]. He will some day be in possession of thirty thousand livres a year: he does not owe a single pistole; these are not mere words of course. Whom can you find preferable to him, when law is out of the question? The lady has two hundred thousand livres; could Madame de La Fayette expect less? Give me your opinion, for I tell you nothing but the truth. M. de Lamoignon is the depository of the articles, which were signed four days ago, between M. de Lamoignon, the Lieutenant of Police, and Madame de Lavardin, who made the match.

But what say you to all these changes in the magistracy? I am quite grieved that our M. de Lamoignon should not have been one of the number; both he and his friends are hurt at it. Your M. de Torcy [3] was certainly

[1] René de Marillac, Dean of the Counsellors of State, married Marie-Madeleine de Marillac, his daughter, to René-Armand Mothier, Comte de La Fayette, younger son of Madeleine Pioche de La Vergne Comtesse de La Fayette, and Colonel of the regiment de La Fère.

[2] Louis Mothier, Abbé de La Fayette, eldest son of Madame de La Fayette.

[3] Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Marquis de Torcy, appointed Secretary

born with a caul on his head: ah, would you had made him write with good ink! But it was not decreed that we should profit by the ardour of his friendship; it was not the will of God, this is evident, and we think no more of it. M. de Pontchartrain is appointed Controller-General; I expected this, but not so soon; we are going to write to him: you will not fail to do the same, as well as to Madame de Mouci; she is now sister of the first President [1], but she will not be vain of the distinction.

How happy Pauline is, to be with you! you will new-model her; it is a good sign when she approves the praises you bestow on Madame de Dangeau. This dear child is capable and deserving of all that you can teach her; I have always thought so since you told me she had sense, and was desirous of pleasing you. Once more I say, how happy she is, to be with you, and to see and hear you! Coulanges seems delighted with her, as well as with you and M. de Grignan, your Castle and your splendour: your manner of doing the honours of the house seems to have made a very deep impression upon his brain; he will, at least, acknowledge you for the Duc and Duchesse of the *Campo Basso* [2]. In short, my dear Comtesse, what can you not do when you please? and with what an air, and what a grace! My son has read what you have written him with pleasure; he has lately communicated his thoughts to you; he desires you will be convinced that I am in perfect health, and that the air of *The Rocks* is excellent. M. d'Aix has scarcely acted civilly in not paying you a visit; what folly, to wish to be first President [3]! But the truth is, he is mad; luckily those on whom it depends, are not so: if, notwithstanding your endeavours to live upon good terms with him, his conduct should give you offence, I advise you to write to Madame de La Fayette; she is not convinced that he can be in the right when he opposes you, and there are few things he

of State upon the death of Charles Colbert, Marquis de Torcy, his father.

[1] Achilles de Harlai.

[2] The lower camp.

[3] Of the Parliament of Aix.

dreads more than to appear ridiculous in her eyes. I am aware of the contempt in which your Parliament is held, in leaving them such a leader as we are acquainted with: attend a little to what has been the fate of those to whom that Province has been given, Messieurs d'Argouges, Pontchartrain, Boucherat; these are men, and not *sea-horses* who neigh and commit a thousand extravagances. I shall also mention La Faluère, with whom everybody is satisfied. Adieu, my child, I embrace you with infinite affection.

LETTER 931

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, September 28, 1689.

You astonish me by the account you give me of the illness of M. de La Trousse. I was informed that a kind of palsy had seized him from the hips downwards; this is a shocking circumstance, and deprives him of the power of enjoying society, and consequently of receiving consolation. I do not comprehend how this malady can be cured by the waters of Bourbon; how can it be supposed that waters which are only cathartic should be fit to restore strength and vigour to relaxed and insensible parts? In short, my child, this is a most extraordinary illness; I pity M. de La Trousse, more than he would pity me. I hope the Chevalier will find as much benefit from the waters of Balaruc as he is led to expect. They must surely have great efficacy, or people would not repair from one end of the world to the other, to bathe an hour and a half in three days, the only way in which they are used, for they are not drunk. Let me know their effect, and particularly whether the Chevalier has been relieved by them. This journey cannot be long, if they only bathe three days; if, after this, the Chevalier should be able to serve, you would all have great reason to wish the campaign in Dauphiné fell to his lot, as your fine Castle would then be his retreat and rest-

ing-place. Enclosed is a letter from Coulanges; you will find that he is still full of your magnificent reception and of Pauline.

Madame de Chaulnes informs me that she has spoken to M. de Croissi, who will do his best, and that a letter shall be sent from the Duc de Chaulnes to M. de Pommereuil; all this hangs together so badly, that I have no further hopes of it. M. de Pommereuil and Maréchal d'Estrées are entirely devoted to us; the last wishes only for a hint to name my son: this is what M. de Chaulnes should do, or Madame de Chaulnes after her husband's departure; this is what he should have written after he had learned at Lyons that M. de Lavardin was not to hold the States. In short, I shall never comprehend this lethargy, after their long-continued friendship, having said to us a hundred times, "This is more our business than yours." I can only conjecture that they did not choose to oppose M. de Coëtlogon, to whose assiduity the return of the Parliament is attributed, and the present given by the city of Rennes; though in fact he had nothing to do with it, for it was voluntary: but as he is Governor of Rennes, he puts on an air of importunity, and they were a good deal embarrassed in acquainting me with this disagreeable circumstance. But why then did they recommend my son to M. de Lavardin? this is what puzzles me: but I will perplex myself no more with it, though I cannot, however, believe that they have no longer any regard for me; it must be ascribed to timidity, rather than indifference, and I find that this good Duchesse is overwhelmed with remorse. Did I not inform you that her husband wrote to me from Toulon? I shall answer him at Rome, when I shall be more certain of what I have to tell him: but I will not complain; this would be acting an ill part: everything is confounded and concealed in the journey to Rome; we have suffered no humiliation of any kind, with regard to the public; and my heart justifies them, not doubting that they love us better than M. de Coëtlogon.

There is an Abbé of Francheville here, who has a

great deal of wit, and is agreeable, unaffected, and learned without ostentation; Montreuil is acquainted with him. He has passed his life in Paris, has seen you twice, and you have made an impression on his brain like a divinity. He is a great Cartesian, and is Mademoiselle Descartes's tutor; she showed him your letter; he admired that, and your enlightened understanding. His wit pleases and amuses me infinitely; it is a long time since I have been in such good company. He calls my son *nate deâ,* and he thinks me also a divinity, not of *la plebe degli Dei* [1]; for my part, I consider myself only as a sylvan divinity: but to satisfy M. de Grignan, who may be apprehensive that I shall marry him, I have to inform him that another widow, young, rich, and of a good family, struck with his wit and merit, has been married to him for these two years, after having refused Presidents *à mortier*: what more need be said? and he, sought after by this widow whom he ought himself to have sought after, yielded, at length, at the age of sixty, quitted his Abbey, to have no other employment than that of a Christian and Cartesian philosopher, and of being the wisest man in this Province. He is always at home, and his wife, who is a young and elegant woman, is never happy but when she is with him. He has visited my son and me, and, if we are pleased with his conversation, he seems delighted with ours. You would certainly like this man: his name is M. de Guébriac; he came fourteen leagues to see us, and the idea he has of you gives me great pleasure. I should not be satisfied with any merit that was ignorant of yours.

My dear Pauline, I was charmed to see your writing once more; I was fearful you would have forgotten me in your prosperity; it is so great a one for you to be on good terms with your dear mamma, and to be worthy of her esteem, that a little head like yours might easily be turned by it. I advise you to continue the exercise of all your little perfections, which will secure your mamma's love for

[1] The plebeian gods: a quotation from Tasso's *Aminta.* The words *nate deâ* are from Virgil's *Æneid.*

you, and at the same time the esteem of all the world.—I am, indeed, very glad, my dear daughter, that for your amusement, and the honour of my prophecy, Pauline has become amiable and gentle, as you wished her to be.

I cannot comprehend why an alliance with Mademoiselle Le Camus should be less desirable, than if her uncle had gone to Rome; what a jest! Was she considered as the niece of a Minister of State? He was nothing more than a Cardinal of great merit, and a pious man: he is so still.

LETTER 932

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, October 2, 1689.

It will be a year to-morrow since I saw you, embraced you, heard you speak, and left you at Charenton. Good heavens, what a lively remembrance I have of that day; and how I long for another, that may be distinguished by seeing you again, embracing you, and clinging to you for ever! Why cannot I thus end my life with the person who has wholly occupied it? This is what I feel, and what I tell you, my dear child, without intending it, to commemorate the end of this year of separation.

After this, I must tell you, that your last letter is so gay, so sprightly, has so much of the *currente calamo* in it, that it charms me, because it is impossible to think and write so pleasantly, without being in good spirits and in good health. Let us first talk of the Chevalier; I think his situation must be much improved since I saw him. What! I might see him stamp with his right foot! As to the left, it still kept the field with glory, though it was sometimes humbled by the state of its colleague, which mortified us equally. In truth, nothing but a miracle could have restored him the use of his right foot; for he was almost as lame as M. de La Rochefoucauld, which was quite deplorable; and this change is effected by three quarters of an

hour's bathing for three successive days, in these salutary waters: neither Mont-d'or nor Barège could have done as much. In three days, then, we are free. Assure the Chevalier of the sincere joy I feel, from the relief he has derived from these charming waters, till we can pronounce the word *cured.* You pay a high compliment to M. de Carcassonne's solicitude, in comparing it with yours for me; I can easily conceive that none can be more affectionate or consolatory. The Chevalier, then, thinks Madame de Ganges [1] greatly altered; this is odd; she was really much to blame, not to answer to the idea he had formed of her: I have sometimes seen a likeness to that beautiful model, but a hundred thousand degrees below it; for besides her features, so many things are wanting, with respect to manner, grace, and what constitutes beauty, that the resemblance dwindles to nothing. If I had known she had been the wife of my Ganges, whom I have so often seen, I should have viewed her, perhaps, through a different medium; but the deed is done.

Let us talk of Madame de Montbrun; good heavens, with what spirit do you paint this woman! Your brother is delighted with the portrait, but he will not tell you so, he only embraces you. He is with his honest friend; and it is I who have to thank you for having left everything, and flown with such impetuosity to describe this woman, who is really an original: full of her noble ancestry, which she traces as far back as the Flood, and which occupies her mind entirely; all her Guelph and Gibelin relations, friends and enemies, with whom you fill your page inimitably, with the greatest humour and drollery; her reveries, in calling the Marquis d'Uxelles her enemies, when she certainly means the Germans; the crowns with which she decorates and intrenches herself; her astonishment at seeing your natural complexion; her fancying you have neglected yourself, in showing the natural colour of your veins and skin; that you ought to paint your face; and because you

[1] Sister-in-law of the unfortunate Madame de Ganges. The name of this lady was Gevaudan.

display the complexion God has given you, you appear to her quite neglected and undressed. Messieurs de Grignan are very clever in thinking hers a natural complexion: this shows the discernment of men, they neither know what they see nor what they say; I have met with those who have even admired inferior beauties.

You have taken a pretty trip to Saint-Esprit; you have seen M. de Bâville, the terror of Languedoc; you have also seen M. de Broglio [1]. I consider our Revel as the *Cæsar,* and Broglio *the neglected Laridon* [2]. Has not the Chevalier seen them both in the chains of Mademoiselle du Bouchet? Broglio was so furious a lover, that he was one cause of her throwing herself into the Carmelites.

I must add, my beautiful child, that we are no longer angry with our good Governors, at which I am delighted; I was almost in despair in thinking them to blame. It is certain, and all our friends agree, that the Duc could not say a syllable to the King, neither on the subject of Brittany nor the deputation, without great impropriety; Rome occupied everything. He spoke to M. de Lavardin, and wrote to Maréchal d'Estrées: Madame de Chaulnes has said all that could be said to M. de Croissi; and nothing can be more evident, than the pleasure they would have had in succeeding; but we think no more of it, and if by accident we should obtain it, we shall consider it as a miracle. This is not the greatest evil that arises to me from the death of the Pope; I am really grieved when I reflect upon the loss you will sustain by this event.

I thank you, my daughter, for making me so completely one of the members of your society, by informing me of what passes in it: nothing is so dear to me, as what comes from you and your family. I recommend to you the care of your health, and the preservation of your youth, and not without reason. I laugh with you at M. de Grignan's gout: this is a fine consolation to a man in pain; but

[1] Victor-Maurice, Comte de Broglio, commanded in Languedoc; he was brother of Charles-Amédée de Broglio, Comte de Revel.

[2] See La Fontaine's Fable upon *Education,* Fab. 165.

everything is preferable to the colic. God bless you all; my compliments, remembrances, and caresses, where they are due: you know your own share, my dear child; it is my entire self.

LETTER 933

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, October 5, 1689.

It had never entered my brain to accuse certain iron wires in the head-dress of being the cause of long faces; this hint would be very useful to certain persons of our acquaintance. I had heard they were very friendly; but no, quite the contrary: these two little wires press against the temples, prevent the circulation of the blood, and cause abscesses; some die in consequence; they may consider themselves fortunate, whose faces are only lengthened an ell, and who become pale as death; but young people, who are more hardy, may recover in time. I am very much inclined to place this story in the class with some others formerly related to me by the good Princesse de Tarente; however, it is not amiss to know everything.

I do not in the least doubt that M. de La Garde, who never refused a remedy, will avail himself of that of the lady you mention. You will see him with his head on the ground, and his heels in the air, *turning an affair* [1] like her; I believe, that if we were to pursue this regimen for any length of time, we should no longer have sore eyes; I have nothing to give you in return for your account of this visit.

We have had a very worthy, sensible, agreeable, unaffected, learned, and every way desirable, visitor with us; a man of great endowments, and capable of entering upon every subject of conversation: he has been here for a week. One of his brothers-in-law is arrived, the Abbé de Marbeuf, who spoils nothing; and a brother-in-law of the

[1] It has already been observed that this was a favourite expression of M. de La Garde's.

Comte de Lis, who would spoil everything if he opened his lips; this is a secret misanthropist, for he keeps his chagrin to himself; he is very well made, and sings so much like Beaumaviel, that he might be mistaken for him. When our worthy friend departed, everything was comparatively flat and insipid; we renewed the just observations we made in this country with you, on pleasant and disagreeable company; and fixed that the disagreeable was the most desirable: their absence is a relief; whereas pleasant society leaves us dull and dejected, we cannot easily pursue the old track; it is a misfortune to associate with sensible people, but it is a misfortune that does not often happen to us.

You ask me for news of our deputation; we wish to think no more of it. Madame de Chaulnes has twice spoken very well to M. de Croissi on the subject. The Abbé Têtu is animated by Madame de La Fayette to remind the Minister, and passes so well in review all that Madame de Chaulnes had represented, that everything is to be hoped from his zeal and earnest endeavour to accomplish what he undertakes. Madame de Chaulnes has intrusted him with the charge of this affair, as she is not always at Versailles; Madame de La Fayette does wonders; the Duc de Chaulnes has written to Maréchal d'Estrées, who desires nothing better than to serve us; such is our situation. For my part, I believe M. de Coëtlogon will carry it, for the reasons I gave you the other day. The other candidates are M. de Lanion, and M. de Château-Regnault; we wait for the unravelling of all this with a tranquil look, and an undisturbed mind. I thank you for having prevented the Chevalier from writing to M. de Cavoie [1] on this affair; it would have been wrong.

My son laughed immoderately at your Madame; he has heard of a certain long visage at Rennes, and wants to know how it has been acquired; he is gone to pay a visit to Maréchal d'Estrées at Rennes. You ask what we have done with our thirty ships. Alas! what we always do with them. We were delighted to receive them at Brest; this

[1] Brother-in-law of M. de Coëtlogon.

was one of the most important affairs in the world; they all set sail together, steered as far as the island of Ushant, and then returned to Belle-Isle, from thence to Brest, and there it ended. You find that the person who said there had been no decisive action at sea since the battle of Actium, was quite in the right. Madame de Lamoignon has been brought to bed of a son at Bâville; on his way to Paris, the coachman overturned the carriage, and killed the poor child: what say you to having or not having a good coachman? You are right to be pleased with the diversion the gout affords to M. de Grignan's intestines: God preserve the interior of this place, and prevent the outworks from being so dreadfully insulted; for whatever comes under the denomination of pain is hard to bear; the Chevalier will not contradict me. Let me know constantly how the waters of Balaruc agree with him, and at what time your States of Languedoc are to meet; ours will be convened on the twentieth of this month at Rennes. Adieu, my very dear one; oh! how glad I should be to walk with you all upon that beautiful terrace!

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*LETTER 934

From Madame DE LA FAYETTE *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ

Paris, October 8, 1689.

My style will be laconic; I have no head; I have had a fever; I have commissioned M. du Bois to tell you so.

The business of the deputation has completely failed; wonders were performed on all sides; I doubt whether M. de Chaulnes himself, in person, could have obtained it. The King expressed no dislike to M. de Sévigné, but he had long promised it, as he said, to those who were candidates for the office. We must lay aside our hopes till the next Assembly of the States: we know not who is the person in question, but this, my dear friend, we know is in question, that you must, on no consideration whatever,

spend the winter in Brittany. You are old [1]; *The Rocks* are surrounded with woods; colds and coughs will destroy you; you will grow dull, your mind will lose its energy, and will decay: all this is certain, and worldly affairs are nothing in comparison to what I tell you. Talk to me not of money, nor of debts; I put my hand upon your lips on this subject. M. de Sévigné will send you to Malicorne in his carriage, where M. de Chaulnes's carriage will meet you: you then reach Paris; you will alight at M. de Chaulnes's, for your own house will not be prepared to receive you; you will have no horses; this will be merely a temporary residence, you will return home at your leisure. But to come to the point. You now pay M. de Sévigné for your board, and are keeping house here: add these together, and you will find that you are living at a greater expense than you suppose, for your house rent still goes on. You will say, "But I am in debt, and I shall be free by this means." Take this into consideration, that you will here find a thousand crowns, with which you may pay off your heaviest debts; this sum is lent you without interest, and you may repay it by instalments as suits your convenience: ask me not whence it comes, nor from whom, you will never know; but it is from persons who are not afraid of losing their money [2]. No arguments upon the subject; words and letters will be unavailing: I will not even read what you write: in short, my dear, you must either come, or renounce my friendship, Madame de Chaulnes's, and Madame de Lavardin's, for ever: we will not have a friend who is determined to grow old and kill herself by her own fault: your conduct is foolish and weak: you must come as soon as the weather is fine.

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[1] Madame de Sévigné was sixty-three years old at this time.

[2] It was Madame de Chaulnes. See Letter 939, of October 23, 1689, in this volume.

LETTER 935

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, October 9, 1689.

No letter, my daughter; I am quite unhappy when I lose this pleasure; to-morrow I shall have two at once: I must accustom myself to these disappointments, for complaint is useless. I am here alone; my son is gone to Rennes to visit Maréchal d'Estrées, and my daughter-in-law to see her mother. I shall have a lady from Vitré with me to-morrow, whom I like tolerably well, so that I shall not be quite alone. M. de Pommereuil has given Maréchal d'Estrées the Duc de Chaulnes's letter. Madame de Chaulnes has conferred twice, with all her eloquence, with M. de Croissi; the Abbé Têtu has a high opinion of the Duchesse's weight with the Minister: if, after this, we lose the deputation, I shall say it is because M. de Chaulnes is at Rome; because M. de Lavardin did not hold the States; because M. de Château-Regnault, and M. de Coëtlogon, who are in the service, are preferred; in short, because it was not the will of God, for we have, on our part, exceeded the utmost of our little abilities; and I shall not take the pains to hate persons, who, I am persuaded, are as much vexed at it as myself. Here ends the chapter.

What say you to M. de Seignelai, a Minister of State, at the age of six and thirty [1]? Madame de Lavardin tells me wonders of Madame de Mouci and her brother [2], who has forbidden his secretary, in a way to enforce obedience, to take anything whatever, either directly or indirectly; and the better to dispose him to this, he has given him two thousand crowns to begin with, and has doubled his salary from eight to sixteen thousand livres; the wages of the other servants are raised in proportion, to secure them

[1] Madame Cornuel returning from Versailles at this time, was asked what she had seen there. "Some very curious things," she replied; "love in the grave, and ministers in the cradle."

[2] Achilles de Harlai was just appointed first President of the Parliament of Paris, where he was before Attorney-General.

from every kind of temptation. You will agree that this is a great and noble alteration, and very flattering to a soul like this magistrate's. Madame de Mouci, his worthy sister, finding his table and expenses increased, gave him the other day twelve thousand livres worth of new plate, and will not even allow her brother to thank her for it, saying it was quite useless to her, and a mere trifle. To speak candidly, I envy such actions as these; it affects me to the heart, to find souls of this stamp; this is making a proper use of riches, and placing virtue in the foremost rank: I thought you would be pleased with this anecdote of a family you love. I also wrote to Madame de Mouci, that the King, the Parliament, France, and all the pleaders, ought to be congratulated on the appointment of such a man to such a place. I am sure my letter did not displease her; but it is evident that she does not intend to answer it, and that she will not indulge herself in raillery: God bless and guide her, for she will be in paradise even in this world; she is no longer with us, and is very happy.

I have been informed that the Marquis d'Uxelles has been very well received at Court, that the Court is at Fontainebleau, and that the Duc of Burgundy and his governor [1] have both an intermittent fever: all this you know, my dear Comtesse. Had I received your letter I would have answered it, and would not thus ridiculously waste my time in beating the bushes. If I had received a visit from Madame de Montbrun, I could have written volumes; but everything here is so uniform, that materials fail. I believe that the States will not be convened till the twenty-fifth at Rennes. I do not know the precise time that the Parliament will return thither. A President and four Counsellors have been created: it is, perhaps, expected that these posts will be filled. M. de Bailleul has resigned his post in favour of his son; M. de Mêmes officiates for himself: here I am a *gazetteer* again. Let us talk of Grignan; how is the poor Comte? where are the enemies, within or without? he must allow us to wish him pains in his arms,

[1] M. de Beauvilliers.

that his intestines may escape; but we wish the whole place were in good condition. Does the Chevalier return to Balaruc? it would be laying in a good winter stock of health. Where is M. de Carcassonne? is M. de La Garde's head still on the ground, and his heels in the air? was Pauline born with a caul, or is this a rare instance? and you, my child, are you handsome, or in other words, are you well? I constantly think of Grignan, of you all, of your terraces, your fine and glorious prospect; I leave my woods to walk with you; but in this multitude of ideas, some occur that make me almost shiver with terror, when I reflect on the negotiation that is at this very instant carrying on to dispossess you of Avignon. Ah! *tell it not in Gath.* Embrace me, love me, believe me entirely yours, and reflect that it is a year, a whole year, since I have seen or met you.

LETTER 936

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, October 12, 1689.

Here they are both; but, good heavens! how miserable the first would have made me if I had received it without the second, which informs me that the Chevalier's fever has abated, and afforded him a day's rest! This takes away the horror of a continually increasing fever, accompanied with suffocation, delirium, and drowsiness, which all together form a dreadful disorder. The blood, the constitution, the gout, must all combine in this. What a pity it is that such high blood, capable of performing the most brilliant actions, should sometimes perform such ill offices, and render the others useless! In short, this is a very melancholy affair for all, and for you in particular, whose kindness of heart leads you to be the nurse of all you love. Now I am more than ever at Grignan, though I was frequently there before, from the double interest I take in what passes since this illness. Distance exposes us to write many absurdities; at least, they become so by arriving out of sea-

son: you are melancholy, busy, or uneasy; a letter from Brittany appears, full of gaiety and trifles: I am ashamed of it, but I have told you a hundred times, these are the ill-timed effects of distance.

I have informed you that I am no longer displeased with M. and Madame de Chaulnes. It is certain, and his friends have told me, that he could not, with any degree of propriety, have mentioned the affairs of Brittany. He recommended my son to M. de Lavardin, thinking he would have the same desire to serve him that he had; and this was true. He has since written to Maréchal d'Estrées, and his letter would have had a proper effect, if the King had not publicly declared to all the candidates for the deputation, that it had long been promised; Madame de La Fayette tells me this, without saying to whom, but it will shortly be known; she adds that M. de Croissi mentioned my son to the King, who seemed to have no dislike to him; but that the same day His Majesty declared himself; and this the Maréchal expected, who cares very little that the Governor of Brittany loses this noble privilege, provided he pays his court. Madame de La Fayette has freed him from all his engagements, and thus the business has ended. My son is at Rennes; the Maréchal, with whom he is well acquainted, having seen him a hundred times at the Marquise d'Uxelles's, boldly contending with Rouville, is much pleased with his visit: he plays every night with him at backgammon; he waits for the arrival of M. de La Trémouille to pay his respects to all, and then returns home with his wife; this is the best plan he can pursue. I am still alone, but find no inconvenience from it: the lady from Vitré will be with me to-morrow, she has been detained by business. I must tell you what Madame de La Fayette writes, in the style of a decision of the higher powers, first from herself, then from Madame de Chaulnes and Madame de Lavardin, threatening to love me no longer if I refuse to return immediately to Paris; saying that I shall be ill here, that I shall die, that my mind will decay, that, in short, I must make no opposi-

tion but come, and that she will not even read my frivolous reasons to the contrary. There is a vivacity and friendship in this, my dear, that pleases me. These are the plans she proposes to me: I am to go to Malicorne in my son's carriage; Madame de Chaulnes is to dispatch the Duc's there to meet me; I am to take up my abode with her at Paris; I am to buy no horses till the spring; and the best of all is, I am to find a thousand crowns in my coffer, from a person who has no occasion for the money, who will lend it without interest, and will not hurry me to repay it; and that I must set out immediately. This is a long letter for a person just recovered from a fever; I answered it in the same way with gratitude, but treating it as a jest, assuring her that the company of my son and his wife, books, and the hope of returning to Paris in the summer, without lodging out of my own house, or being in want of an equipage, as I shall then have one, will not be irksome to me; and I shall not then owe a thousand crowns to a generous friend, whose noble and magnanimous conduct would distress me more than all the bailiffs in christendom. I added, that I gave her my word I would not be ill, would not grow old, nor foolish, and that she would still love me notwithstanding her threat; this is the way in which I answered my three good friends. I will, some day, show you Madame de La Fayette's letter. Good heavens, what a proposal! to be out of my own house, to be dependent, to have no carriage, and to be a thousand crowns in debt! Indeed, my dear child, I would infinitely rather be here: the horrors of a winter in the country, are worse in prospect than reality. Tell me whether you approve my conduct; were you at Paris, ah! that might indeed shake my resolution; but this is not the case. I have taken my time, and concerted my measures accordingly, and were you now to fly there like a bird, I know not whether my reason would not entreat yours, with the permission of our friendship, to let me complete certain little payments this winter, which will constitute the repose of my life. I could not refrain from relating this

trifle to you, hoping it will not come unseasonably, and that the Chevalier will enjoy as good a state of health as I wish him.

You astonish me in what you say of M. de Chaulnes. I assure you that during our journey it was impossible to be more agreeable than he made himself; I know not whether your *genius* inspired him with vivacity, but you would certainly have found him as I described him. I no longer trace a resemblance to him in the portrait you have drawn. My son imagined, that the sneering woman he mentioned, had desired him not to speak in his behalf, but he now finds he was mistaken.

Your dream has surprised me; you think it a false one, because you did not perceive a single tree before the door; but you will laugh to hear that it is true: your brother cut down all the trees two years ago; he piques himself upon having a fine prospect, according to your dream, and carries his passion to such a height, that he is going to build a low wall round the lawn, and to turn the tennis-court into a bowling-green; so that there will be nothing between the road but a ha-ha. It is true, that when this is finished it will be a great improvement, and add much to the beauty of the lawn; it is planned after a design of M. Le Nôtre's, and the *Place Coulanges* is planted with orange-trees. The future, as well as the past, should have displayed itself to you in this dream. I preserve your letters and your dream for my son and his wife, who will be charmed with your remembrances.

I am far from being upon ill terms with M. and Madame de Pontchartrain [1]; I saw them in Paris since your departure; I have written to them both. The gentleman has already answered mine and my son's letter very agree-

[1] Louis Phélipeaux, Comte de Pontchartrain, succeeded, in September 1689, M. Le Pelletier, as Controller-General of the Finances, upon his predecessor desiring leave to retire. M. de Pontchartrain had been first President of the Parliament of Brittany, and had for some time officiated as Controller of that Province. It was at this time that he had some misunderstanding with the Duc de Chaulnes. He was afterwards Minister and Secretary of State in the Marine department, and then Chancellor of France.

ably; there is nothing particular in my manners towards them, for it is no crime to be our Governor's friend. I return my dear Comte's friendly regards doublefold, I honour and salute the sage La Garde, I give a kiss to Pauline, and my heart to my dear daughter. God restore the Chevalier, and may this letter find you all in health and happiness. Tell me which is the Chevalier's apartment, that I may be there with you. The Abbé Bigorre informs me that M. de Niel fell down the other day in the King's chamber, by which he received a contusion; Félix bled him, and cut the artery, and it was necessary to perform the grand operation upon him immediately: what say you to this, M. de Grignan? I know not which I pity the most; him who suffered, or the King's first surgeon, who cut an artery.

LETTER 937

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, October 16, 1689.

How happy I am, my dear child, that the quinine has produced its usual effect! I trembled, I own, when I opened your letter, for everything is to be feared from such a constitution as the Chevalier's. How fortunate that so healing a medicine should agree with the heat of his blood! You have great reason to believe that I was uncommonly interested in the event of this disorder. But as you are the centre of all proceedings, and the source of all health, I congratulate you on your success. But I am still more astonished that the gout should have cured M. de Grignan's colic, and that the fine weather has driven away the gout, than that the quinine should have cured a fever. You may then take to yourself the credit of the rice diet, which is so softening, and which may have wrought all these miracles. I take care not to be absent from Grignan, now you have the pleasure of seeing all your Grignans in such good health; I am too deeply interested. I

cannot now go to Paris, lest I should be absent from thence: Madame de Lavardin's manner of pressing me, and of facilitating my journey, and Madame de Chaulnes's style, are very amusing. She seems to consider herself Gouvernante of Brittany, but I shall show her that Madame d'Estrées is the present Gouvernante [1], and that I am no longer under her laws. Indeed, they are excellent friends; I do not think it possible to use more forcible arguments, or to devise more solid expedients; and all this because they fear my present situation is dull, that I shall be ill, that my mind will lose its activity, and, in short, that I shall die; so they want to see me, keep me, and govern me. M. du Bois is also an accomplice: this is a pleasing conspiracy; I like it, and am obliged to them, without being at all moved. I will keep their letters for you; you will see whether friendship and truth do not shine in them.

I hear that M. de Coëtlogon is to have the deputation: I never doubted it; neither do I think that M. de Chaulnes doubted it. He is not without discernment: he foresaw the return of the Parliament, the present of the city of Rennes, and the share M. de Coëtlogon seemed to have in all this, as Governor of the city where the States are held. Everything is in his favour; he is at an enormous expense; it is fortunate that the journey to Rome confuses this affair; I question whether this good Duc could with all his might and main have obtained it; so God orders everything for the best. But when I accused M. de Chaulnes of negligence, I was not for depriving him of the means of justification. What, my child! shall I find you, a strict Cartesian, reasonable and just as your ideas are, condemning him as guilty when he is not so, because he has been deficient in activity upon another occasion? could this prevent you from seeing other objects in their true light? This is a strange sort of justice; you would have been sorry if the fourth Court of Inquests had judged your cause thus: I, with all my weakness, felt, in

[1] Maréchal d'Estrées commanded in Brittany in the absence of M. de Chaulnes.

this respect, as if we had obtained the deputation. I expressed myself, however, as being hurt when I wrote upon the subject; but I thought he would have found a passport with you, and that you would have recollected what I often repeat, "What is good, is good; and what is true, is true." This should always be viewed in the same light; if there be many points of reflection in other respects, they should not be confounded here, any more than certain waters with other certain rivers. I thought too you would recollect that ingratitude was the object of my greatest aversion; indeed, I detest it, and I chase it wherever I find it: but I see you have forgotten all this, since you supposed there was something forced in what I said to you. I felt it, but spare me, at least, the thought of having wished to display such ridiculous provincial generosity; I should be sorry if you thought me so changed. This pretty sentiment flowed so naturally from my pen, that I resume the subject again very frankly, and conjure you to be convinced, with the same justice, that if tardiness and negligence appeared on the late occasion, the justification is not less true, nor ungrateful people less ungrateful; in truth, these things should not be confounded; and you now find that the good Governors were not to blame.

I am not recovered from my surprise, respecting the alteration you told me you had found in M. de Chaulnes's understanding. Indeed I do not know him again; he was quite a different man during our little journey; it was your *genius* that animated him: your presence, added to the business of Rome, was too much; they overcame him. There is a Venetian Cardinal of the name of Barbarigo, Bishop of Padua, who had more votes than were necessary for his being elected Pope; but the *accessit* [1] spoiled all. I know not what this means; all I can learn is, that it prevents the election of a Pope; but still there will be one too soon: this melancholy reflection is always with me.

I am pleased with Coulanges's praise of Pauline; it is well applied, and makes me understand what sort of

[1] The arrival of the Duc de Chaulnes with a large sum of money.

charms she possesses, curbed however by persons who have not given her the best nose [1] in the world. If the Comte had given her his fine eyes and fine person, and left the rest to you, Pauline would have set the world on fire [2]; she would have been irresistible: this pretty mixture is a thousand times better, and must certainly form a very pretty personage. Her sprightliness resembles yours; your wit always bore away the palm, as you say of hers; I like this panegyric. She will soon learn Italian, with the assistance of a better mistress than you had. You deserve as excellent a daughter as mine has been. I told you, that you might do what you wished with yours, from her disposition to please you; she appears to me worthy of your love. I am quite alone; my son and his wife are still at Rennes; my visitor from Vitré is returned; I am very well, so do not pity me. My son waits the arrival of M. de La Trémouille, who is hourly expected. He is with Maréchal d'Estrées as with one of his acquaintance, and plays every evening with him at backgammon. Every countenance at Rennes is lighted with joy, upon the return of the Parliament, which will take place on the first of December; the States will meet on the twenty-second of this month; the Maréchal is very polite and agreeable; the Bretons are not displeased at the change; this, my very dear one, is all the news I can tell you. Be not uneasy about my solitude, I do not dislike it; my daughter-in-law will soon return. I take care of my health, I should not like to be ill here; when it is fine, I walk; when it is wet or foggy, I do not stir; I have learned wisdom. But you who are the queen and the *efficient cause* of health in others, be careful of your own, and consider that your preservation is a still greater blessing than that you have already bestowed on them.

Madame de Mouci has made another present to her brother of a beautiful piece of Bellièvres tapestry; the sub-

[1] Pauline's nose resembled her grandmother's.

[2] This was an expression applied by M. de Tréville to Madame de Grignan herself, when she appeared at Court in the zenith of her beauty.

ject is, *The beheading of St. John*: it is worth two thousand pistoles. How happy she is, to be able to make such pretty presents! I think M. de Grignan issues very good orders against the *half-converted*. I find, you are to have M. de Vins in your neighbourhood; his grandfather [1] made a great figure there formerly. It is said here that the King of England has defeated M. de Schomberg: I shall not give credit to this, till the news reaches St.-Germain.

LETTER 938

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, October 19, 1689.

You may be angry with M. de Chaulnes if you please; for my part, I cannot; you have justified him to me, your words have produced their effect upon my mind. I shall not change my opinion, more particularly as the constant remembrance of him, of Grignan, Toulon, and Rome, from whence he wrote to me on the fourth, act upon my heart, as if he had really done me a kindness: I can discover nothing but pleasing attentions; and the most I said at first was, that I never knew a person remember those he had forgotten. But I now discover his policy, and I do not comprehend how you Messieurs de Grignans, who are courtiers, particularly the Governor of Provence, can think it strange, that knowing, as he did before we could hear it, that for various reasons this deputation would fall to M. de Coëtlogon's lot, he should content himself with simply mentioning his intention to M. de Lavardin on his departure, and with writing to Maréchal d'Estrées. It may easily be conceived that he was not willing to lay himself open, nor to take offence at having it no longer in his power to name a deputy, when he is happy enough to be able to conceal the Governor of Brittany behind the Ambassador of Rome, and to puzzle all inquiry by his absence.

[1] Hubert de Vins made himself respected by the League party in Provence and in Dauphiné.

It is a fortunate circumstance that it falls to M. de Coëtlogon's lot, as he had no share in the appointment; if he could not have succeeded in preventing it, he would have had a bitter dose to swallow; and I say too, that if he had not been Ambassador, I think, in good policy as a courtier, the King being engaged to M. de Cavoie, that he ought to have seemed reconciled to it, rather than appear in his government with a Deputy that was disagreeable to him. I make M. de Grignan the judge of what I say, and I consider the hasty conclusion you draw in your letter as the effect of your friendship, and not the result of your reflection: in God's name tell me whether I have made a convert of you; for my part, I cannot alter my belief. Formerly the situation of a Governor was the most agreeable in the world; he chose whom he pleased, and the King approved him without any difficulty; this charming prerogative has, by degrees, vanished. M. de Charost made the first encroachment upon it, he made MONSIEUR write; and by means of this trick, he, or rather his son, was not Deputy till two years after; the enemies afterwards became powerful, and weighed very heavily upon Brittany and the Governor. Gacé completed the ruin of the whole through M. de Cavoie, and it was necessary to have recourse to a hasty ill-cemented peace to avoid this mortification; at length the deputation is this year compromised, and given to a man who really is entitled to it, who has never had it; and M. de Chaulnes was not forced to consent. All this is according to rule; should we not be just, and place ourselves in the situation of others? this is never done. My son is clever, he is well qualified for the office, but he has quitted the service, and it has been made up to him by the *arrière-ban*. M. de Chaulnes, however, had hoped to give a favourable turn to all these things, by means of circumstances which have brought Brittany into favour this year. God commands a hasty journey to Rome; nothing is to be mentioned to the King but Rome, Rome; what can be done? This is an arrangement of Providence; it is a cruel journey to us, equally fatal to my

son and to my daughter. This letter, my dear child, is somewhat long and tedious, I am aware of it; but it is dangerous to put me in a train to talk: one word more, however; did not the Duc write to you from Rome? Madame de Chaulnes is delighted to hear that he is not only well, but that he was saluted by the discharge of cannon as Ambassador, without giving up the franchises, which enraged the Spanish Ambassador; he had desired all the Cardinals to prevent it. The Court is pleased at this auspicious beginning, and considers it as a good omen. A word to the Duchesse upon this subject would be very becoming. I enclose you the Abbé Bigorre's billet; but is this correcting myself? Well, it shall positively be the last time.

I am still alone here, but I am not dull; my daughter-in-law will return in four or five days. My son is the Maréchal's favourite: Revel, who is going, will keep him till the opening of the States; he also expects M. de La Trémouille.

LETTER 939

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, October 23, 1689.

I am still alone, my dear child, without being dull; my health is good: I have plenty of books, work, and fine weather; these, with a little reason, go a great way. I see, notwithstanding all that my son and his wife tell me of their great desire to see me, that they are delighted to be at Rennes; and I, from this moment, am really glad they are there. I forbid their returning, I even think they are right: there is very good society at Rennes, and everything there is brilliant with joy; the Bretons appear insensible to the millions that are going to be demanded of the Province; they think only of the return of the Parliament to their poor city, and to the finest palace in France; this is where the States are held; nothing can be more magnificent. Curiosity also drew many people thither to see the

new faces of Maréchal d'Estrées, M. de Pommereuil, M. d'Eaubonne, M. de Lezonnet, instead of Messieurs de Chaulnes, de Fieubet, de Harlai, or d'Harouïs; men are fond of variety. M. de La Trémouille passed through Vitré three days ago; he was received with great noise on account of his Knighthood; this is one of the occasions where honours and even duties are increased according to the prerogative of certain estates. He makes a *tremendous* appearance, with his fine figure, and his *blue ribbon*; no one but M. de Grignan can be compared to him, I would even say in *beauty,* were I not afraid of offending the Comte, for it is certain that M. de La Trémouille surpasses him in that point. He sent his compliments, and that he would have waited upon me if his retinue had not been so fatigued; and I returned them, without having any. The Abbé de Roquette is with him: he wrote me a very witty letter, full of praise and affection, just as his uncle would have done. The States met yesterday: I have some doubt of the beauty of the speeches. The nobility are pleased at having M. de La Trémouille for their President; they do not like M. de Rohan, though a man of family: when they see him without the Order of the Holy Ghost, it will be a great humiliation; for indeed he ought not to be without it, it is a slur upon a Duc and a Peer.

So much for Brittany. You will, perhaps, be tired of it; but these are the natural fruits of our garden; we will talk of Provence by and by. Let us say something of the Pope, for there is one; if I had been at Paris, I would have gone to kiss his mule in the chamber of the Abbé Bigorre; he is there painted to perfection. It is Cardinal Ottoboni, a Venetian [1], the intimate friend of M. and Madame de Chaulnes, and also of Madame de Kerman [2], whose merit and beauty he adored, when she was eighteen. This is the man we have to deal with; there is the Duc tracing out the greatest interests, depriving you of your dear Avignon: I

[1] Elected Pope October 6, under the name of Alexander VIII.

[2] Madame de Kerman was at Rome with M. and Madame de Chaulnes in 1670. She was then Mademoiselle de Murinais.

wish he may display on this occasion all the good sense I have known him to possess; I do not think he has left any of it behind him. Madame de Lavardin informs me that this Ottoboni is the most worthy and the most learned man in all the Sacred College; but he is seventy-nine years old: has not the mind passed the bar at this age? The poor dear Abbé said, yes; but the late M. d'Arles said, no[1]. So that we must believe that, being chosen, he will discharge this high office with ability. For my part, I should be of the opinion of Patrix; that it was not worth while to put on the Papal robes at so great at age, any more than to put on his clothes again on his recovery from a fit of illness, at his time of life. Madame de Chaulnes very much fears that her husband will be left at Rome, to be ready for the approaching Conclave. Let us say a few words respecting this Duchesse; I will tell you a secret that will make you love her. But you must first believe, that if they could, they would have been delighted to have given the deputation to my son; it may easily be supposed, that they would much rather he should have had it than M. de Coëtlogon. Nor can we imagine that they interested themselves in behalf of the latter, as you all say, since M. de Chaulnes mentioned my son to M. de Lavardin, recommended him to the Maréchal by letter; and Madame de Chaulnes, supported by the lively Abbé Têtu, mentioned him twice to M. de Croissi; this appears very clearly, but observe the sequel. This good Duchesse really grieved that M. de Chaulnes's presence before his departure had not operated in favour of the deputation, as they both had hoped, formed the idea, with Madame de La Fayette and Madame de Lavardin, to make me come to Paris, imagining that the failure of this business keeps me in Brittany, and that her absence from Rennes throws me upon *The Rocks*; for she supposes, if the Duc had held the States, I

[1] Madame de Sévigné quotes the example of the Abbé de Coulanges, her uncle, who died August 23, 1687, aged eighty; and that of M. d'Arles, M. de Grignan's uncle, who died March 9, 1689, aged eighty-six; to infer that the minds of those who attain their eightieth year, decay more sensibly in some than in others.

should not have quitted her. All these ideas agitated her, and gave such strength to the conspiracy of my friends, as greatly harassed me; and, in short, it was Madame de Chaulnes who was to lend the thousand crowns, but with so good a heart, and so good a grace, and with such an earnest desire that the offer should be accepted, that Madame de La Fayette, thoroughly convinced of the sincerity and friendship of this good Duchesse towards me, earnestly entreats me to plague myself no more about the deputation. Madame de Chaulnes continues to write to me that what is deferred is not lost; that my son is young; that many people wait ten or fifteen years for this place; and that it is her business, without saying a syllable about the thousand crowns. I shall, however, mention the subject to her, as Madame de La Fayette has intrusted me with the secret; the Duchesse wished to put them into the hands of Beaulieu, that I might think they had fallen from the clouds; but all this neither tempted nor bewildered me, for such conduct would lead me to discharge my debts, more than all the bailiffs in the world. I have made a just observation on the misfortune of having debts; those which press us are pressing, those which do not press us are more pressing still. This is a long discourse, but I was willing to show you the bottom of her bag, and of my own; and how difficult it is, not to have a good opinion of the heart of a person who is sincere, and who is constantly thinking of me with such friendly sentiments. My friends at Paris are satisfied with the Duchesse's conduct; you see how the world goes, and how often we pass sentence without hearing both parties. I hope you will not be tired of reading these details, for I own it would be difficult to correct myself, as I take great pleasure in relating them. But I conclude, my child, embracing you with an affection that is singular in its kind. I do not yet talk of my schemes; I conjecture that I shall be free towards the end of the summer, it is a long time till then: we will concert our measures together, having the same intention to meet once more.

LETTER 940

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, October 26, 1689.

I conclude, my dear child, that, at this very moment, you are no longer in possession of Avignon. The first thing the King has done with regard to this new Pope, who is perfectly agreeable to him. and surpasses our hopes, is to give up to him this charming spot, which was so advantageous to you [1]: this reflection overwhelms me with grief. I have a little account to give you from the Abbé Bigorre that you will not be displeased to hear. M. de Chaulnes is fortunate indeed; no one can dispute his claim of being the best Pope-maker in the world. The present Pope is a better man than we could hope for; he is a Venetian; it was he who answered on the fourth of October to the Ambassador's compliments; and on the sixth, by way of thanking him, M. de Chaulnes made him a Pope; for this exaltation was a sudden performance quite in the French style, against the advice of the Spaniards and Germans. He is one of the most learned men of the Sacred College, and has no other fault than being eighty years of age. This news has quite enraptured Madame de Chaulnes; the Holy Father has inquired after her and Madame de Kerman, saying he should die contented if he could see them once more. All France has been to compliment the Duchesse; I suppose you have written a congratulatory line to her, as well as to the Duc, though he deprives you of Avignon. This is the luckiest event in the world for him: you know all this; but it is impossible not to chat.

M. d'Arles is now with you; he wrote to me from Paris, and I shall answer him at Grignan, and as he speaks to me of his abdication [2], I shall not hesitate to tell him my

[1] The Venetian county and Avignon, which were in the possession of France, and from which M. de Grignan derived considerable advantages during the time of the quarrel with the Court of Rome.

[2] The place was that of President of the States of Provence, which

thoughts on the subject, though it be a settled thing, and he says M. de Pomponne and Madame de Vins have approved it: it is so easy to cheat people into approbation, that it ought not to constitute authority. He tells me it was of no use but to M. de Grignan; I want only this to confute him: is the being useful to an elder brother in such a place, nothing? He need only consider what pleasure this will give to M. d'Aix, to know how mortifying it must be to M. de Grignan. Besides, when did a Grignan think it no object to be useful to his family? Those who love one another, as you say, to the last drop of their blood, in whatever form it may be, have they not given sufficient proof, on all public occasions, that they are but one? how comes it, then, that the Archbishop pleases to retract, and renounce this honourable and good reputation? I am of your opinion, that it is being punctilious indeed, to be hurt by a strip of wood upon a bench, which constitutes all the difference of place, which falls neither upon the person nor the name, and which only exists in this *Assembly,* for a few days, as it relates to the Archbishop of Aix and the Archbishop of Arles. Should this be sufficient to urge him to speak to the King, in the tone of a man who had long made a sacrifice, the weight and disgust of which are at last become insupportable? Is it possible that the King should have really entered into the merits of this complaint, and not have been surprised that the honour of serving, which was so highly valued upon entering on the office, could no longer support him against a mortification which was only imaginary? In short, my child, I am hurt at this abdication, and wish he may repent of this as of the other things, in order to avenge us. But I have said so much on this subject, that I shall refer the Archbishop to it, if he will do me the honour of allowing me to speak my

M. d'Arles (Jean-Baptiste Adhémar de Monteil) had filled after M. de Marseilles (Toussaint de Forbin). But by the nomination of M. de Valence (Daniel de Cosnac) to the Archbishopric of Aix, M. d'Arles being obliged to give up to him the place of President, he thought it no longer incumbent on him to assist at the Assembly of the States, to avoid being only in the second place, according to the rank of his Archbishopric.

sentiments of what he tells me, and I shall only slightly touch upon it in my answer to his letter.

But a word respecting Madame Reinié[1]: what a fury! Did you not think she was dead, and that her spirit came to persecute you with her noise, as in her lifetime? For my part, I should have been terribly frightened, and should certainly have made the sign of the cross; but I believe something more is necessary to get rid of her. Is it possible a woman could travel one hundred and fifty leagues to demand money of a person who dies with impatience to pay it, and who sends it as soon as possible? No arrival at Grignan could astonish me so much as hers; I gave an involuntary shriek at hearing it. You are, however, quite right to behave civilly to her; but how could you avoid her paws, and that torrent of words which drowns and overwhelms? I am quite pleased at what you tell me of Balaruc, I have seen it upon the map. It is a melancholy thing that the Chevalier can find no relief, and that his disorder should have destroyed all the good effects which we at first thought the waters had produced; I feel this misfortune keenly. These waters are very violent: I would not trust my limbs in them, and particularly since I have now no ailment in my hands. I know not where all those little extravagant disorders are concealed; I sometimes think treason is going forward, I am so well. I shall very much pity you, when you are all separated; you will then really have no company but Madame Reinié, and one other person who I must own is as hateful to me as to you. But you sometimes bid me say certain things only to the echoes: I shall take care not to intrust them with anything: we have one in the *Place Coulanges,* like that at La Trousse, a little slanderer, who returns word for word close to the ear. By the bye M. de La Trousse has received very little benefit from the waters of Bourbon.

The day after I wrote to you, I saw my daughter-in-law return when I least expected her; she left Rennes, in spite of everyone, and all the amusements there, to come,

[1] A shopkeeper in Paris.

as she says, to me, preferring this pleasure to all the entertainments of the States. This surprised me, and would have made me uneasy, if I had not perceived that she was really pleased, and that this was done with as good a heart as it was with a good grace. Du Mesnil has introduced the opera of *Atys* at Rennes; it is shortened, but is very pretty. My daughter-in-law was once there, and was very well pleased, but is still more so at being returned; she says, "Everybody tormented me at Rennes upon my being so desirous to return to *The Rocks*; but, when I reminded them that it was to be with you, they all agreed that I was right; particularly Maréchal d'Estrées, M. de Rennes, M. de La Trémouille, and M. de Pommereuil." In short, here she is; I judged that this little account would not make you quarrel with her. As to my son, the Maréchal would not let him come away; he is the only person with whom he converses unreservedly [1]. He is quite unhappy that my son is not appointed Deputy; he was very desirous of rendering us this little service, as well as Madame de La Fayette, who had solicited his interest upon the occasion. He does not much approve of M. de Cavoie, the friend of M. de Seignelai; you see the rest.

Our States met on Saturday the twenty-second; there was a great throng, crowd, and confusion; but the Maréchal spoke very well, and better than was expected; the first President, *de communi martyrum*; M. de Pommereuil very well in his way, but not so well as Fieubet and de Harlai, the beauty of whose speeches charmed their hearers; in all the harangues the Duc de Chaulnes was highly praised, and the news of the exaltation arrived very opportunely on the same day. The next day M. de Pommereuil asked three millions for the King, which were im-

[1] We find this Maréchal in the list of Ninon's lovers, when he was only Comte d'Estrées. From this circumstance partly arose his attachment to M. de Sévigné: it was like a school friendship. It was this Comte d'Estrées who, coming after Villarceaux, disputed his claims to the child to which Ninon gave birth at that period. Not being able to agree, like Rabelais' judge, they cast the dice for him. Fate consigned this child to the Comte d'Estrées, who afterwards distinguished himself in the navy by the name of La Boissière.

mediately granted; though in fact, we know not well where they are to be had, with M. d'Harouïs's contest; but with regard to the grace with which it was done, nothing could exceed it. After this hopeful beginning, Revel set out to resume, he trusts, his first profession. He called here on Monday, but only stayed to dinner, and went to sleep at Laval. We asked him what sort of death all his mistresses had chosen: he replied wittily, that whatever it might be, they would choose it with M. de La Trémouille and the Comte d'Estrées, in whose hands he had left them. We talked of the Chevalier; he appeared to me to be very much unfrozen in his esteem for him; he boasted of having known him in peace and in war; I also assured him that he did not love one who was ungrateful. He hopes to be sent into Germany with Maréchal de Lorges; I recommended the Marquis de Grignan to him; he told me it was for him to request the Marquis's protection, he was so much out of exercise. How hard it will be, my dear child, if you cannot see your son this winter! is he not eighteen this month? The Germans are provoking with their winter campaign.

We pass our time here very quietly; this you cannot doubt; but very swiftly, which will surprise you: work, walking, conversation, reading, all these are called in to our assistance. Speaking of books, you tell me wonders of M. Nicole's last production; I have read some passages that appeared to me very fine; the author's style enlightens as you say, and makes us enter into ourselves, in such a way as discovers the beauty of his mind, and the goodness of his heart; for he never scolds out of season, which is the worst thing in the world, and never produces the desired effect. I did not purchase the book at the time, which was in Lent: I contented myself with the good Le Tourneux [1]. We are reading a treatise of the pious man of Port-Royal [2], upon continual prayer, which is a sequel to certain

[1] Nicolas de Tourneux, Confessor of Port-Royal, so well known by his excellent work entitled *The Christian Year*, and by a great number of other important works.

[2] Jean Hamon, physician of Port-Royal, author of several very pious and enlightened writings.

pious works, that are very fine; but this, which is much larger, is so spiritual, so luminous, and so holy, that though it be a thousand degrees above our understandings, it does not fail to please and charm us. We are delighted to find that there have been, and still are, people in the world, to whom God has communicated his Holy Spirit and grace in such abundance; but, good heavens! when shall we be possessed of one little spark, of one single degree? How sad it is to find ourselves so far behind here, and so near in other things! fie, fie, let us not name this misfortune! we ought to humble ourselves at it a hundred times a day.

It is a month since the news of M. de Schomberg's defeat came to this country; it was sent from St.-Malo to M. de Louvois; but as it has not yet been confirmed by a courier to the Queen of England, it is supposed to be false.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *the Younger also writes to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

(*Enclosed in Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ'S *letter.*)

I have seen all the kind things, my dear sister, that you have said of M. de Sévigné and myself. He is still at Rennes, and I have had sense enough not to hesitate a moment in repairing to Madame de Sévigné. I am certain you will not disapprove of my taste, and that this preference will not lessen me in your opinion. I shall not talk to you of the deputation, the subject is exhausted; we bear our misfortune so well, that it shows we were worthy of what we wished to obtain. I am delighted, my dear sister, to find that our apartment is ready at Grignan; I embrace you affectionately; will you not allow me to do so? I would also embrace M. de Grignan if I dared; but my love for him is so great, that I hesitate.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *continues and concludes her letter to her Daughter.*

Indeed, it is with regret I resume the pen, for she uses it well; but it is only that I may embrace my dear Comtesse.

LETTER 941

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, October 30, 1689.

Let us talk of the grief of separation; I have long felt for you, and have said that you would be too much alive to the misfortune of having had such delightful society; but you have changed your opinion. I told you in the summer that the Chevalier might probably pass the winter at Avignon, or in some other part of Provence, to enjoy your brilliant sunshine, and add a mild winter by way of appendix to the waters of Balaruc, as many people do who dread the cold of Paris; you repulsed me unmercifully, and said this was wishing the worst that could happen to him; that if he were to remain there, it would be a sign that he was too ill to return; that otherwise he would go back to see his friends and the world. Tell me, then, what has happened, to make you now think he would do well to spend the winter in Provence; for I am convinced in my own mind that, the waters not having succeeded with him, he would pass a melancholy winter at Paris in that little chamber, with your beautiful portrait, which does not utter a syllable, say what we will to it; and if it pleases God that he should be ill, and utter piercing cries, he must in that case infinitely regret your absence, for he is not a man to receive trifling consolations; we must hope it will not come to this. My advice therefore would have been, to try the climate of Provence this year only, as it was so near at hand. You will acquaint me with the manner in which all your separations take place. M. d'Arles is with you: you have given him my letter; I am more pleased than ever at having told him my sentiments freely of his abdication. He boasted of having obtained the approbation of Madame de Vins; but she informs me that he concealed this resolution from her, thinking very justly that she would disapprove it on account of M. de Grignan, and

several other things relative to it; this, then, is the way in which Madame de Vins and M. de Pomponne approve of this measure. You did not inform me of the King's answer, which you were so curious to know; for my part, I do not retract what I said upon this subject.

It is certain that the first thing M. de Chaulnes did the day after the exaltation, was to give up Avignon. Good heavens, my dear child, what an affecting thought is this! it is a grief too that is justly founded, considering the circumstances into which it throws you. When I reflect and speak upon this subject, it becomes my own business, I can think of nothing else. But I must suppress these bitter thoughts in my letters; they only renew them in your heart; but they will sometimes escape. It is said that M. de Lorraine is going with his troops into winter-quarters; we shall do the same, if this be the case, and you will then soon see your son again; I wish you this consolation.

The taking of Bonn, and the death of Baron d'Asfeld [1], have caused some sorrow; the King and M. de Louvois regret his loss, and praise him highly as an able officer, and a skillful negotiator. M. de Chaulnes's negotiation may continue longer than was supposed; he is considered as the only person who can inspire the Pope with a true desire to restore peace to the Christian Princes. His Holiness does not at all like Cardinal d'Estrées, who it is thought will return to Court. We shall see what God has ordained: "Leave him alone," said the holy Bishop of Angers, who came to pay his visit at the age of ninety-two, with the same good sense as formerly. Adieu, my dear child. Why do you say you have lost your beauty? why are you heated? why is your blood agitated? my own is affected at it: you are too much alive, you have too much sensibility; your nights partake of your agitations by day:

[1] Elder brother of the Maréchal and the Abbé d'Asfeld. He commanded in Bonn, where he made a vigorous defence; sustained an assault, in which he was mortally wounded; surrendered, October 12, and made an honourable capitulation twenty-seven days after the trenches were opened, and after a blockade of upwards of three months, during which time the enemy had destroyed the city by cannon and bombs, before they began to besiege it in form.

endeavour to calm yourself, avail yourself of your fortitude, your philosophy, your Christianity, to support the burden of sorrows which Providence allots you. Your sister-in-law says a thousand affectionate things to you by me; one of her whims is, to make me talk of you. I embrace M. de Grignan; I no longer know how I stand with the rest; I fear that, ere this reaches you, the birds will all be flown. We had your sunshine here for some time, and you had our showers; but for these two days past, I believe everything has resumed its former station; so that you must now have fine weather. Pauline has written me a charming letter; she says with great audacity, that *she has no fear of destroying*[1]; that, on the contrary, she pretends to surpass the praises Coulanges has bestowed upon her, that she learns Italian, that you are her mistress, and that she reads *Il Pastor Fido*; and then asks me a very odd question, little hussy! Truly, I send her back to her relations.

LETTER 942

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, November 2, 1689.

Your letters come now more regularly than when the weather was fine. The sky of your Provence, however, looks terrifying; you are not accustomed to these torrents; you paint your Castle in great disorder, and if you had not saved all your beautiful furniture, and particularly your beautiful drawing-room, that is worthy of a place at Versailles, I should have been very much grieved. We begin to feel the rain, but as we have still some fine sunny rays, I profit by them with pleasure, because this soil is as dry and pleasant as that of our poor Livry; so that I shall often walk. The beginning of your letter says great things in few words; Ottoboni, *Pope*; the county, *given up*; the

[1] Allusion to the hackneyed expression of false modesty, "I fear, in writing to you, (or speaking to you), that I shall destroy the favourable idea you have received of me."

King and M. de Chaulnes, *triumphant*; and Madame de Grignan, *ruined*; this it is that grieves me to the heart; we must endeavour at least to let hope supply the place of the solid consolation which His Majesty gave you. If you should enter upon this business towards the end of next year, and should both go to Paris, I should find my account in it, as the Knighthood would take place at the same time. But I cannot comprehend M. de Grignan's idea, *alone at Easter*; I can better understand that of returning to Grignan to spend the winter after the Assembly, notwithstanding the north-wind, which becomes still more untractable at that time; this would, at least, agree with the Chevalier's health and your business. In short, my dear, you are all wise folks, your conventicle is met, you will take proper measures, and we will confide in such good heads. I am very desirous that M. d'Arles should tell you his reasons, and also that he should see my letter; we are upon sufficiently good terms for me to tell him my sentiments upon a subject which he mentions to me first; I beg you will not allow him to place Madame de Vins among the number of those he has consulted, and whose approbation he has received. You think my friends have proved their regard for me by their proposals; you are right; nothing could be more kind; but it is enough, to have had the pleasure of this trial of their hearts and friendship; for it would have been doing little honour to my first resolution, to have changed it, and have been burdened with another debt of a thousand crowns. Indeed, my child, there were no other steps to be taken than those I took, that is, to be sensible of their kindness, and grateful for it. If I were to publish a *gazette* of the state of my health, you would be convinced that I shall keep my promise with Madame de La Fayette; you would see under the article of *the bladder*, that that part of the country was in a state of perfect tranquillity; that the sandy people, who formerly invaded it, are carrying on their operations in more distant lands; that letters have been received from the extremities of the kingdom, which declare that the legs were never in better

condition, nor more fit for service; that the hands, which are upon the frontiers, are no longer subject to the caprices of the nerves, their neighbours, or the vapours, their allies: in short, that this state would be a perfect country, if the fountain of youth could be found in it; this is its only misfortune. After this ridiculous *gazette*, which you have desired, you may, I think, be quite easy with regard to my health.

You seem to be making some reparation to M. de Chaulnes's understanding; you find it so excellent at Rome, that you are obliged to think he was meditating upon all these important affairs when he was at Grignan; he is therefore restored to your good opinion in this respect; let him be so also on the subject of the deputations. He was not wrong to dispose of them for fifteen years, without mentioning it to the King, as Maréchal de La Meilleraie always did [1]. But a change has taken place with regard to this, for these four years past, as in everything else. What snakes has he not swallowed! you have seen it. He knows that his good friends have found out a new road for deputations; he is aware of it, and has always said to my son [2], except this year, that it was necessary to be a courtier now, as the times are changed. He thought the Nobility and their Commander might have had some influence this year: at least, he had reason to believe that his recommendation would do something, either by writing from the Province, where he was rendering important services, or by setting out for Rome. His timidity, or the impossibility of speaking of Brittany, prevented his proposing the deputation to the King; he only recommended it to M. de Lavardin, and wrote on the subject to Maréchal d'Estrées: nor do I yet know, if he did not expect to find M. de Coëtlogon in his way, and that he would thereby only have exposed himself; I believe this is the truth of the affair. It is so certain that nothing is thought of but pleas-

[1] He was Governor of Nantes and Brest, and Lieutenant-General of Upper and Lower Brittany.

[2] M. de Sévigné had quitted the Court, upon retiring from the army.

ing the city of Rennes, that by the most unheard-of measures, which I am very much pleased at, the deputation of the clergy has been given to M. de Rennes by a *lettre de cachet*; this is a packet which never before entered Brittany upon such an occasion; for the Bishops used to succeed according to their rank, and this year it fell to the lot of M. de Vannes, or M. de Tréguier, who are so much astonished at the proceeding, that they know not what to think; but it is sufficient to be M. de Rennes, who is astonished too, and asks if the packet be really for him; for no one was ever received for a deputation: judge if the Governor of Rennes would not have obtained it with more justice. Madame de Chaulnes is so surprised at all this, that she keeps her eyes constantly fixed upon Rome, and is much in the right. The King said to her last week; "M. de Chaulnes was not long at Rome, Madame, before he made himself talked of; he has found again good friends there, and has been very well received." "Sire," she replied, "he that bears Your Majesty's orders, is always well received." The whole Court was ready to overwhelm her with compliments and professions of friendship; I hope you have written to her. I am of your opinion, my dear child, that M. de Chaulnes will remain there for another Conclave, or rather to settle with the Pope, who loves him, the principal objects they have to confer upon together, and those he intends to dispose him to approve or confirm for the general tranquillity; this would be a fine stroke; and if Madame de Chaulnes and Madame de Kerman were at Rome, they would be proper seconds to him. But the new Pope hates Cardinal d'Estrées as much as he loves the Ambassador, and it is thought His Eminence will return to France; if so, Madame de Chaulnes's departure will be deferred. I am as much grieved as you, that the last Pope, who suffered us to remain in possession of Avignon, did not live as long as M. d'Arles[1]; such longevity would have been fortunate indeed for you, but it was not

[1] These two prelates lived, the one to the age of ninety-five, the other to eighty-six.

the will of God. I informed you that M. de Chaulnes entered Rome like an Ambassador, *al dispetto* (in spite) of the Spanish Ambassador, who endeavoured to prevail on the Cardinals to prevent it; but out of fifty-six votes, he had but five[1].

I do not give mine to M. de La Garde, either to preach or scold; I know very well, that Jesus Christ, St. Paul, and St. Augustin, preached and exhorted, it was their business; this latter gives good reasons for doing so. But a poor sinner, recovered only three days from a worse state than ours, should keep silence, penetrated with the mercy of God towards him, occupied only with his happiness, and the true gratitude he owes to his Saviour, for having selected and distinguished him from so many others, without any merit, through free grace: such should be the sentiments of his heart, and if charity should make him interest himself for his neighbour, it should display itself in lamentations before God, and in supplicating the same grace for others that has so plentifully been poured upon him. Such was that penitent and holy Princesse, Madame de Longueville; she did not forget her situation, nor the abyss from which God had saved her; she preserved the remembrance as a foundation for her penitence, and her lively acknowledgment to the Almighty. Thus is Christian humility preserved, and the grace of Jesus Christ honoured. This does not preclude reflection, and Christian conversation with our friends; but no sermons, no scolding; these revolt, and make us recollect and refer persons to their past life, because we find they have forgotten it. I am astonished that people of good sense should fall into this injustice: but we ought to be astonished at nothing; for what do we not meet with in our journey through life?

It appears that our Marquis will soon be in winter-quarters, like the rest, and that he will be able to pay you

[1] It is said that M. de Chaulnes had nearly three millions to distribute, to create this Pope. D'Avrigny dares not formally deny the fact, which so great a majority, and so speedily obtained, renders very probable. It was money thrown away, or very much like it.

a visit; I wish it, my dear child; this is the greatest consolation you can have; I have a great desire to embrace him, as well as my dear Comtesse. I am very glad that the Comte grows fat: he was thin when I saw him, which made me uneasy. The description you give of your storms, is so beautiful and poetic, that it delights my imagination.

LETTER 943

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, November 6, 1689.

M. de Chaulnes has written to me very affectionately and pleasantly; he says that he might boast of the brilliancy of his negotiation, if it were not for the grief he feels at having been compelled to offer the Pope the charming county of Avignon; that he did it with so ill a grace, that he thought His Holiness would refuse it, but that he was unfortunate enough to be deceived, and that, on the contrary, the Pope received it with such pleasure, as renewed the good opinion he already had of this present. At length, my child, the deed is done; *God gave it you, and God has taken it away from you*; we must bear up against this loss, as well as against many others. I must tell you once more, that, if you are just, you will agree that the Duc has not deceived us. He told us before the last meeting of the States, that things had changed, that he had no longer the same power as formerly, and that it was necessary to appear a little at Court; I have told you what he founded his hope upon latterly; he had some reason to believe that as least this year, his solicitation would have as much weight as another persons's. He spoke in this style to M. de Rennes when he passed through Malicorne; I cannot doubt of his desire to oblige me and my son, though he did not think it proper to talk of Brittany at Versailles; he spoke to M. de Lavardin, and wrote to Maréchal d'Estrées; Madame de Chaulnes to M. de Croissi; and you

know what was done by M. de Cavoie. It is fortunate for the Ambassador, that the mortification he must have felt upon this subject, is concealed and lost in his absence, and he has done us equal honour in this country; for every person at Rennes considers my son as the Deputy M. de Chaulnes would have appointed; and M. de Coëtlogen, as the Deputy of his journey to Rome; we have, therefore, no reason to complain, and indeed we are very far from doing so. I must confess, I think it strange that you, the Chevalier, and the rest, the great Lords and Governors of the Province, should judge it right that the Governor of Brittany should be deprived of the noble privilege of appointing Deputies independently, and to say that M. de Chaulnes made himself a King; he certainly would have been much to blame not to have done it, as all other Governors had done before him. Since the marriage of the Duchesse Anne with Charles VIII. this fine extensive Province had many other privileges. M. de Chaulnes for fifteen or sixteen years followed the steps of Maréchal de La Meilleraie; do you think it either noble or just to make a merit of degrading this beautiful government? Is it not the common interest of all great Lords and Governors? Should they not view themselves in this example? I am acquainted with two or three who have been very sensibly affected at it with regard to themselves, and it cannot be one of this body who has introduced such a revolution. Alas! what do not these poor Governors, to please their master? with what joy, with what zeal, do they not fly eve to the hospital for his service? Do they consider their health, their pleasure, their lives, as any thing, when obedience to his pleasure is necessary? and yet it is subject of complaint against them to have an honour, a distinction an opportunity of obliging persons of quality in a Province! And why do they wish to be beloved and honoured, and act as Kings? is it not for the service of the true King? is it for themselves? Alas! they are so passionately attached to his person, that they only wish to lay aside their fictitious characters, to come and behold him at Versailles,

even though they should not themselves be noticed; and shall complaint be made against them for an assumption of grandeur, which they so properly employ? Is it possible, my child, that you should be of a contrary opinion? Come, then, to my assistance, M. de Grignan; support me, it is your business; if you desert me, I shall wish you every possible disgust in Provence, and shall praise and admire those who, by their industry, may find the means of placing you upon the rank of others. I will say no more; why, too, do you make me speak what I think? It is in you, however, that I confide; and besides, I know nothing so good as to understand reason. M. de La Rochefoucauld and M. de La Feuillade would not indict me for my sentiments upon this subject.

Let us talk of our States. The Holy Ghost came in a portmanteau to the Council of Trent, says Fra-Paolo; so the deputation came in a *lettre de cachet* to M. de Rennes: these vehicles are equally extraordinary. Maréchal d'Estrées will not let my son leave him for a moment; he knows no one but him, speaks to no one but him, and pays his visits in company with him; in short, he is so little acquainted with Brittany, that if he had not found a commensal officer of the Marquise d'Uxelles, he would have been very much embarrassed. He keeps a tremendous table, the Maréchal surpassing M. de Chaulnes; two tables, for eighteen persons each, from morning till night, all served in new, beautiful, gadrooned plate; in short, it is who can spend the most; for there are twenty tables of the same magnitude. The opera of *Atys* is performed very agreeably, by Mesnil; and also some plays.

How sorry I am for the Chevalier's ill state of health! what a severe fever! Good heavens, how I pity him! He is right not to go to Paris in such a situation; how uncomfortable I should be there, without you and without him! Your stay in Provence has completely fixed mine here. I enclose you letters from Madame de La Fayette, and Madame de Lavardin; as to Madame de Chaulnes's, it was a volume without end; dwelling upon the conviction that it

is her absence that makes me spend the winter at *The Rocks* instead of Rennes. She places to her own account all that can possibly happen to me there; and was so sincerely disposed to rain upon me a shower of gold, that she was never weary of importuning me to set out; but, my child, this is over; I am very well here, particularly when you are at Grignan.

I am informed that the Pope has convened his friends to terminate the affair of the franchises with France and with all the crowned heads; and another congregation to examine the means of making a general peace in Christendom. It is thought that Cardinal d'Estrées will return, and that Cardinal de Bouillon will remain for the affairs of France. I am sure the Ambassador is not yet ready to return.

Sainte-Marie, my old friend, the King's Lieutenant at St.-Malo, has been to see me. He told me he had written to you for a vote; pray, satisfy him: he is a man that would go any length to serve me: everybody loves him in this country; he is the comfort of all the exiles, of all the prisoners at St.-Malo; in short, he is a little Artagnan, faithful to his Prince, and humane to those whom he is obliged to guard. He has a thousand good qualities, he says he has learned them of me: you recollect how I converted him, by assuring him upon my word and honour that our religion was preferable to Calvin's. I should very much pity M. de La Garde if he had forgotten his first condition, which, like our gratitude to God, should never be separated from Christian humility. M. Nicole is quite divine.

My son still continues at Rennes; his wife takes great pains to amuse me. M. de Lauzun is going to take a romantic voyage to Ireland with six thousand men. Be careful of yourself, my beloved child, and love me with an affection that belongs only to ourselves.

LETTER 944

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, November 9, 1689.

M. d'Arles, then, has passed through the midst of the fires of Tasso, of the gigantic phantoms, of the armed men, for all these defended the passage [1]; and has found nothing but dry and barren heaths. I was in hopes to have found wood enough for our last floor, and that M. d'Arles would thus see his apartment habitable, and M. de Grignan no longer be compelled to go up into the gutters, the impropriety of which I thought he had long been convinced of. In this way, my dear, all would have been finished; but how can M. de Carcassonne resist M. d'Arles's vivacity, who seizes upon the hare, saying, "Give me four thousand crowns, and go to sleep again, and let me alone!" For my part, I really think he is in a lethargy; a thick vapour prevents his answering a syllable to such forcible reasons, and he must be shook again, and tormented still more, to awake him. I suppose that M. d'Arles will receive my letter at Grignan: will he answer easily on the subject of the noble pride for which I blame him, and which makes him feel personally a preference of seats, that relates only to his benefice, and which as little disgraces the Abbé de Grignan, as it honours the Abbé de Cosnac? In short, my child, these are flights of imagination that cannot be suppressed.

I thought your letter to M. de Chaulnes an excellent one; he pays you with good sense, and you find he did all he could. Madame de Chaulnes has sent me a little account, which she says is only for myself, of a conversation

[1] See Canto III. of Tasso's *Jerusalem.*

Madame de Sévigné's imagination was so lively, her wit so just, and so ornamented, that the excellent use she made of what she read is not at all surprising. But it is extraordinary, that a mother like her, should be certain of finding in a daughter worthy of herself, as much wit and taste, as were necessary to comprehend perfectly all the delicacy of her applications.

between the Ambassador and the Pope; I find in the Holy Father's answer, a great degree of presence of mind, and a vivacity which surprised me, and which plainly show that he possesses all his faculties, and is long-lived. I send it you, as you may perhaps be pleased to see it. The Duchesse says she hopes you will pardon her husband the injury he has done you, and that the armies are preparing to send you back your son. She sympathizes in the grief of Madame de Soubise, who has lost her son [1], after incredible sufferings, and in that of Madame de Guénégaud, who has not only lost her youngest son at Bonn, but her eldest, whom she loved dearer than her life; she has now no children left but the Abbé de Guénégaud, and another, who is also a priest; thus our foresight into futurity often affords us only useless anxiety, because God is preparing for us other troubles.

I dread to mention to you the magnificence of Rennes, lest it should give you an indigestion, for there is nothing but festivity going on; they dine with M. de La Trémouille, and sup with the first President; or dine with M. de Pommereuil, and sup with M. de Rennes; then dine with M. de Coëtlogon, and sup with M. de St.-Malo; thus it is every succeeding day. How does this agree with you? There are twenty tables equally elegant; *Thou devourest all my goods* [2]. My son informs his wife, I suppose from civility, unwilling to believe that it is upon my account she is here, that her absence is much lamented by all her friends, and that he is very sorry her delicate lungs should prevent her from entering into all these amusements. She answers him angrily, that she is offended at such language; that she did not come here on account of her health; that she knows the life that is led during the sitting of the States; that it was solely for the pleasure of being with me, which she prefers to everything else; that if her lungs were equal to the best chairman's in Rennes, she would do

[1] Louis, Prince de Rohan, Colonel of a regiment of cavalry, died November 5, of a wound he received July 5, near the camp of Lessines in Flanders.

[2] A saying of *Harpagon* to *Maître Jacques*, in Molière's *Miser*.

the same; and all this so naturally, that I am obliged to her for it, without having the least scruple at seeing her here. We read a good deal, and the time passes away so swiftly, that it is not worth while to be out of patience, except that I cannot embrace you; for this, I must own, I ardently long for. Adieu: with us it is the finest weather in the world, and I dare say, with you it is still finer; it is St. Martin's summer with us, and the dog-days with you. I embrace, and kiss my beloved child on both cheeks.

LETTER 945

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, November 13, 1689.

Your letter has not yet arrived, this is always a grief to me; though I have in some degree got the better of the apprehensions I formerly suffered from the delay: it is the whim of the post, and we must endure it; but as I am constantly with you at Grignan, I lose the thread of the conversation; this it is that vexes me. I know not whether you go to the Assembly with M. de Grignan, or remain at your Castle. I am very uneasy about the Chevalier's health, and the effects of the quinine, repeated in its usual dose: its heat operating upon that of the Chevalier's blood, brings to my mind an old saying, *When the brave meets the brave, they remain brave.* We hope, therefore, that this brave quinine will make the blood remain brave: God grant it may; it is very difficult to subdue.

Tell me what you have done with Madame Reinié; does she still overwhelm you with her torrent of words? by what means have you silenced her? I will not slacken the reins to tell you of my affectionate and strong regard for you, and the lively interest I take in what concerns you far or near; as all this holds the first rank in what is dear and precious to me, I place it far above my own little affairs, which appear like hyssop compared with your tall cedars.

How can I help entering into all you say respecting the journey to Paris, for the proposal of which you envy my friends? I had great fortitude in resisting when you were at Grignan; had you been at Paris, their great offers would have been superfluous; I feel that you would have destroyed all my measures: but having concerted them so well with yours, it was not easy to put me out of my way. Thus, my dear child, I maintain myself, thus I subsist; I would not mention this to you, and yet I cannot avoid it, considering you as the sole charm and consolation of my latter days, God and his Providence excepted. I am informed of the death of that good and worthy man, the Bishop of Nîmes; so that our poor Livry is again to be given away; I wish the Abbé Pelletier may obtain it.

I have received a long letter from my new friend, the *man-wolf* Guébriac [1]; I would have sent it to you, as his style, which is very easy, would be agreeable enough, if he did not praise me so extravagantly; in fact, my modesty will not suffer it: he is so astonished to find a woman with a few good qualities and good principles, who in her youth had some charms, that he seems to have passed his life in a whirlwind of passions, among a banditti equally devoid of faith and law, where love reigned alone, despoiled of every kind of virtue; this has given rise to some very pleasant things. He demands my protection with you, in the name of M. Descartes, to instruct him properly with regard to the Court of Love [2], which he had heard spoken of, and considered as a fable. He is like a cabinet-article, a great

[1] See Letter 931, of September 28th, 1689, in this volume.

[2] *The Court of Love* was nothing more than a society of wits of both sexes, which was instituted in Provence towards the close of the eleventh century. They communicated to each other their works, and conversed upon different subjects, in which love had always some share. The quarrels and jealousies of lovers were the common objects of their discussion; they determined the merits of the tensons written upon this subject; the tensons were a kind of poetry which the troubadours or trouvères had brought into reputation, in which were treated curious questions of love and lovers. Martial of Auvergne afterwards gave a collection of these judgments, entitled *Arresta Amorum*, and upon which Benoît de Court, a famous lawyer, published in 1533, a learned Latin commentary.

curiosity; he wants to know the truth from the gouvernante of Provence, and whether upon complaint to that court, if judgment were pronounced, it would be by female judges: you have some wits from Arles, and a Prior from St. Jean at Aix (am I not right?), who will give you the necessary information. Guébriac found the enclosed sheet by way of preface to a book of François Barberin's[1], who makes mention of it: I send it to Pauline, she will understand this prose as well as *Il Pastor fido.* This is a trifle you will intrust some one with, and not trouble yourself about it. Were you at Aix, Montruil would settle this affair for his old friend, whose mind is very different from his; but, in short, you will do what you can without incommoding yourself.

The handsome Abbé de Rohan[2], so beautiful, and indeed too beautiful, is at present at the head of M. de Soubise's household, and his livings are given to his younger brother[3]. Our States broke up yesterday, my son will himself send you the news. The Maréchal's expense was ridiculously extravagant; he had every day sixty guests to dine and sup with him, and everything was served with such magnificence as eclipsed M. de Chaulnes, who indeed would have been sorry to vie with him. Adieu, my beloved child; this is enough for to-day. How is your health in detail? your side, your colic? send me a little *gazette*: mine is still like the last. My daughter-in-law embraces you, and continues her attentions to me.

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[1] See *Bayle's Dictionary,* under the article *Barberin.*

[2] Hercules-Mériadec, Prince and Duc de Rohan, became the elder by the death of Louis, Prince de Rohan, his brother.

[3] Armand-Gaston-Maximilien de Rohan, afterwards Bishop of Strasbourg, Cardinal and Grand Almoner of France.

LETTER 946

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, November 16, 1689.

Your letters have both arrived; that of the third travelled to Rennes without knowing why; the fault was occasioned at Paris; I received it on Sunday, after having sent away my letters. I will begin by entering upon the motion that agitates you all, and very reasonably, to know if Madame de Maison's compliment is well grounded: she has frequently told us very unwelcome news, and sometimes very good: but when we hope to hear that the Chevalier's regiment will devolve to his nephew, it is so natural and easy to believe it, that we must commit violence upon ourselves to doubt it; and you that are so skillful in raising phantoms, will find some difficulty to find subjects of despair upon an occasion where everything is in favour of the Marquis; example, name, his father's and his uncle's merit, and his own: all these place him at the head of this fine troop. You cannot doubt, my child, that I am like you in everything that concerns you; you cannot talk to me too long, nor repeat your thoughts to me too often; I enter into all your arguments *pro* and *con,* and into the dialogue of Fear and Hope: I therefore wait like you with all the impatience excited by real, affectionate friendship.

I now know what has happened to the mill-clack, Madame Reinié. I know that you have resolved to go to the Assembly, and afterwards to return to Grignan. I am informed of the state of the Chevalier's health, whose pardon I ask for not agreeing with him respecting M. d'Arles's resignation. I would have made the most of this *second* place to the King, which I should have made him understand I filled only for his service; but, at the bottom, I would not have cared about it; I should have been delighted to have kept it, and served my elder brother. The more I felt myself a Grignan, and superior to M. d'Aix

in every other respect, the more indifferent I should have been to that short meeting of the Assembly, where the prerogative of one Archbishopric over another constitutes the difference upon this occasion only [1]. I own to you, in short, that this is my feeling, and I thought, from his rank and elevated sentiments, that it would have been the Chevalier's also: I have been mistaken; but, much as I esteem his good sense, I shall not change my opinion. On the other hand, I praise the Archbishop for having the courage to finish his building, and I admire him for having obtained four thousand crowns from M. de Carcassonne.

Your sister-in-law desires me to tell you she thinks herself fortunate in having been able to please you, as she did by following her own inclination. You very much increase the pleasure she feels in doing what she calls her duty, by your approbation. She has scarcely felt her husband's absence; he was so near her, she so often heard from him, was so certain he would soon return, that no mortification intruded to disturb her amiable conduct. You speak of all this so affectionately and sincerely, that you renew my love by it.

Your county then is given up. I wish the principality of Orange, which is so freely surrendered to the King, could recompense you for your loss; but it has long been in your government without your being the better for it. I am delighted that you have written to Madame de Chaulnes. Do you not like the little conversation she sent me, and which I sent to you? I am told Coulanges is a favourite with the Pope, that M. de Chaulnes has bespoken a state-coach, and keeps a table as he did in Brittany; this looks like being settled. By the bye, our States broke up on Monday last, they have granted ten thousand crowns to Maréchal d'Estrées; he has spent that sum and more. The Deputies are M. de Rennes [2] and M. de Coëtlogon,

[1] The Archbishop of Aix is the first attorney, by birth, of the county of Provence; and in this capacity he always presides at the Assembly of the States, which are held every year at Lambesc, a town three leagues distant from Aix.

[2] Jean-Baptiste de Beaumanoir, Bishop of Rennes.

the rest are not worth the honour of being named. Your brother will be here to-morrow; he brings with him the Abbé Charrier, and my farmer of Buron, who is a stout gentleman, Madame de Marbeuf, and some others; we fear more from so much company than from our solitude. My son certainly often takes the liberty of quoting the good brothers, who order separate beds in the dog-days; romances are rational compared to this silly book. I shall say nothing of Pauline's taste for romances; I have read them, like many other persons of superior understanding to myself, with so much pleasure, that I must be silent. Examples might be given of the good and bad effects produced by these books; you do not like them, and you have conducted yourself well; I liked them, and they have done me no harm. "To the pure, all things are pure," as you say. I, who chose to support my taste, thought that a young man became generous and brave in viewing my heroes; and a young woman wise and discreet in reading *Cleopatra*. There are people who sometimes take things wrong; but they would not act better, perhaps, if they could not read; it is essential to have the mind well disposed, and then it is not easily warped: Madame de La Fayette is another instance in my favour. It is, however, very true and very certain, that M. Nicole's works are preferable; you are charmed with them; this may serve as a panegyric to the book: what I read of it at Madame de Coulanges's, easily convinces me that it must please you. You will be very happy, and very enviable, if God has made use of this delightful book to inspire you with his love. I, at least, derive this good from it, that I am persuaded it is the only truly desirable object in the world. Upon this ground, I conjure you, my dear Pauline, not to let your mind turn towards frivolous things, but to attach yourself to what is solid, in which class I place history; your taste will otherwise be of a pale hue. We are reading the *History of the Church* by M. Godeau[1]; it is really a very fine work; in what a respectable light does it place

[1] Antoine Godeau, Bishop of Grasse and Vence.

religion! we are ready to suffer martyrdom with *Abbadie*. Everything has its turn; *Corisca* is very pretty and very roguish: *altri tempi, altre cure*. Love me always, my dear child, but never weigh other love in the same scale with yours; your heart is of the first order, and no one resembles it.

LETTER 947

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, November 20, 1689.

You have relieved me from great anxiety, by telling me that our Marquis is Colonel of his uncle's fine regiment; nothing could be more advantageous to him; it is scarcely possible to be promoted higher at the age of eighteen. Now your uneasiness is at an end, and the dialogue of Hope and Fear happily concluded. I defy you, with all your ingenuity, to discover any disagreeable circumstance attending this affair; there is now nothing more to be considered, my dear Comtesse, than to support this rank, which necessarily creates a greater expense than that of Captain. The Chevalier must be paid—how much? It is to be hoped that you will have permission to sell your fine corps, the work of your own hands. In short, good and evil are blended; honours increase expense; we are sorry when they are not obtained, and embarrassed when they are; such is the world. Will not your Colonel pay you a visit? I should think he would have time enough. I have a great inclination to write to him, and superscribe his letter according to my fancy. You have, then, generally a hundred persons at Grignan, and eighty is your least number. I find they are not very scrupulous about burdening you. I approve of your not going to Lambesc, to expose your beauty and Pauline's youth to the fury of the small-pox: this is an evil we cannot too carefully avoid. You have given me such a dreadful idea of the north-wind of Grignan during the winter, that it terrifies me. I sup-

pose M. de Grignan will find it difficult to resolve not to pass these three months in the city of Aix; we must sometimes yield to impossibilities, but it is a painful reflection; and it is a great misfortune to find ourselves exhausted, when it is so necessary to be otherwise: these are very sensible objects, in regard to which, I wish you, as well as myself, all requisite fortitude. The Chevalier will communicate some of his to you: he has so great a portion, of the use of which he is deprived by the gout, that he has some to spare, and should supply his friends with it. Never fail to inform me of his and your plans. Madame de Chaulnes tells me, that she has received a very charming letter from you. Madame de Lavardin was in great affliction, M. de Châlons dying, and his pious mother [1] overwhelmed with grief at the foot of the cross. M. de Senlis [2] and all the Sanguins are very joyous; they have obtained our little Abbey (of Livry), and have given up a Priory to be free of the pension. It is so agreeable to them, that it seems nearer to me than if it had been given to another; they are all our old neighbours.

My son is at length returned from the States, and is very well pleased to be with us; Madame de Marbeuf is here for a short time, and the Abbé de Quimperlé (Charrier) who thinks of nothing but serving me. We expect our farmer, with whom we are to settle a long account without money. The Comte d'Estrées [3] supped and slept here last night, and set out this morning for Paris; I found him very agreeable and lively. He has a fine mind, and so attached to the sciences, and what is called the *belles-lettres,* that if he had not acquired a very good reputation both by sea and land (as the Chevalier can inform you), I should imagine him to be one of those whose talents are an obstacle to their fortune; but he knows very well how to

[1] Louise Boyer, Duchesse de Noailles, mother of Louis-Antoine de Noailles, Bishop of Châlons-on-the-Marne, afterwards Archbishop and Cardinal of Paris.

[2] Denis Sanguin, Bishop of Senlis.

[3] Victor-Marie, Comte (afterwards Duc) d'Estrées, Vice-Admiral and Maréchal of France.

make them agree, at the expense of his rest, indeed, for he spends whole nights in reading, which is too much. I wish our Marquis had only a half of this disposition; it would be sufficient. It was a pleasure to hear him converse with my son, upon ancient and modern poets, history, philosophy, morality; he is acquainted with everything, no subject comes amiss to him; this is delightful. The ignoramuses were quite in the back ground; and the G****s, with the Comtes de R**** and de R****, and their good things, had nothing to say; we were very merry at their expense. Madame de Marbeuf sends you a thousand affectionate compliments; and the Abbé Charrier sends you ten thousand respectful ones. Your M. d'Aix has an Abbey worth six thousand livres a year, which belonged to the Abbé de Soubise; he will tell you it is worth twelve, but you may abate one half. I take my leave, my beloved child; your brother is disposed to write to you. Send me the *gazette* of your health; this is the source of my repose, as you say the fountain of youth with me would be the source of yours; this is an idea which I consider as worthy of your friendship.

LETTER 948

From Monsieur DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, November 20, 1689.

Here I am once more, my beautiful little sister, with our dear mamma, delighted to find her in perfect health, delighted to find myself in repose at *The Rocks,* and out of the phrensy of the States, and delighted to renew my correspondence with you again. My mother has preserved all your letters, which have still to me the charms of novelty, so that it is only since yesterday, that I have been informed of all you have said respecting me. I shall neither compliment nor thank you for what you have written to my mother and to me, as you know how sensible I am to the testimonies of your friendship. I was

soon consoled at not having the deputation, when I perceived I had not been deserted by M. de Chaulnes, as I had imagined. You know that I always complain of crosses; those which have befallen me this year, were of a nature which it was impossible to foresee; for it is certain that out of the three powerful men in the Province, there was not one who was not strenuously my friend, and whose interest was not connected with mine with regard to the deputation; so that it was much more their business than mine to effect it. M. de Chaulnes, Maréchal d'Estrées, and M. de Lavardin, are equally opponents to M. de Seignelai, M. de Cavoie, and M. de Coëtlogon; and were all disposed to deprive their antagonists of the satisfaction of appointing a Deputy, and to have one of their own nomination. I was the only one they all had in view, and it was, in fact, their intention to appoint me. Maréchal d'Estrées entertained hopes as long as he could; he at length received the mandate he so much dreaded, and which had been nevertheless determined upon four months before, as I have since been informed. You judge rightly that, being upon such terms with him, nothing unpleasant could happen to me during the sitting of the States; I tell you this in confidence, for it would not be proper to publish Maréchal d'Estrées's earnest desire that M. de Seignelai and the friends of this Minister should not succeed upon this occasion, though everyone is acquainted with the misunderstanding that subsists between them.

I am very happy to find that I shall soon be uncle to a Colonel, and, perhaps, ere long great-uncle; not indeed to an officer of such high rank; but I shall console myself for this, as the affront cannot be given to me without your sharing in it. Adieu, my very beautiful little sister; I am going to resume my usual avocations with my mother, amusing her by reading history, and taking care of her health; and I shall not, in your opinion, have much merit, for the short time she stays, considering how well she is at present.

LETTER 949

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, November 23, 1689.

How delighted I am, my dear child, that you have taken a little trip to Livry [1]! You have so often celebrated this festival there, that if you had met me, you would not have thought any change had taken place, not even among the Sanguins, whom we have so often seen there, and who are now masters of it, and all our old furniture devolved from Abbé to Abbé, and which will long continue in the state you have seen them, for this Abbey is going to be settled as a patrimony in the family. You have charming weather, and so have we; fine sunshine, mild air: Madame de Marbeuf cannot help walking, though she is not so strong as I am. The Abbé Charrier and I have been these two days settling with the farmer; he is a very honest man; but as his predecessor destroyed our estate, nothing but repairs and drawbacks stare us in the face, and I shall not receive a penny of the thousand pistoles he owes me, as the produce has been applied for the last two years to restoring order; these are strange accounts; but let this console you, as it does me, it will be better in future. I highly approve of your having avoided Lambesc, the air being infected with the small-pox, a disorder the most carefully to be avoided. I shall not be surprised if the Chevalier, with his complaints, to which the air of Paris is so fatal, should take advantage of the opportunity of spending a winter in your mild climate, now he is there; I should rather be astonished, if, finding himself better after using the waters of Balaruc, he did not ensure the success of those baths, by the temperature of the climate, which affords relief to all gouty patients; so that I am very far from thinking he intends to leave you alone.

I have received compliments from the Abbé Bigorre

[1] Madame de Grignan imagined she would be there upon St. Martin's day.

on the Marquis's having obtained a regiment. I have just written to the young Colonel, and the composition of this letter certainly gave me less trouble than your answer to Madame de Vaudemont gave you: if absence, joined to a still farther separation, has doubled and increased the pomp of your rigmarole, you have great reason to be out of breath, to wipe your face, and cry *halt,* like M. de La Souche; but you would not be the only one who would have occasion to wipe his face, in attempting to understand you [1]: I say this in jest, for God always bestowed on me sufficient grace to understand you perfectly. You amuse yourself with building and finishing all your apartments, that are so commodious and so different from the other pompous, ill-finished buildings; there is much more reason in what you are doing. You ask me what books we are reading. When we have company, reading is laid aside; but before the meeting of the States, we read some little books that scarcely took us up a moment: *Mahomet II.,* who took Constantinople from the last Emperor of the East; this is a great event, so singular, brilliant, and extraordinary, that we are carried away with it; and it happened but two hundred and thirty-six years ago: *The Conspiracy of Portugal,* which is very fine: *The Variations* of M. de Meaux: a volume of *The History of the Church,* the second is too full of the detail of the Councils, and therefore might be tedious: *Les Iconoclastes* and *The Arianism* of Maimbourg; this author is detestable, his style disagreeable; he is always desirous of being satirical, and compares Arius, a Princess, and a courtier, to M. Arnauld, Madame de Longueville, and Tréville: but setting aside these fooleries, the historical passages are so very fine, the Council of Nice so admirable, that it is read with pleasure; and as he brings us down to *Theodosius,* we shall find consolation for all our evils in the elegant style of M. de

[1] Madame de Sévigné here ridicules letters that are too elaborately written, too much studied, and therefore affected; what would she not have said, could she have foreseen the time when all the various styles furnished frequent examples of this very defect, and, by aiming at wit and novelty, pains were taken to become unintelligible?

Fléchier [1]. We skim over other books: we have once more dipped into the *Abbadie,* and we shall resume it again with my son, who reads it admirably; thus, my dear child, the time glides away but too swiftly; it is at present an object of great importance to me. If I had found out *the source of your repose* (I never met with so pretty an expression), if I had found it, I should be a prodigal of time, as formerly. I am more grieved at the time you have lost in losing the county; I had hoped it would remain with you much longer; this, as you say, was a *source of justice*; I wish it had depended upon the health of the present Pope, for nothing is talked of but the soundness of his constitution and his activity.

I have read at intervals *The Life of the Duc d'Epernon,* which has highly amused me. You must tell me some Lambesc news; alas! will not poor Madame du Janet be very much grieved? why did not her husband remain peaceably with her? what did he intend to do *in that cursed galley*? The life of man is a mere trifle, it is soon over; in all these histories it passes so swiftly, few of the heroes live to my age! *but no more of that,* the reflection is sufficient. My son, his dear wife, and Madame de Marbeuf, send you a thousand remembrances; the Abbé Charrier a thousand compliments. I am much obliged to this Abbé; he takes upon him all my business of Lower Brittany, which is not inconsiderable, and which I could not have done at Paris; and after all this, my child, I only ask the happiness of seeing you again, and embracing you with my whole heart.

LETTER 950

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, November 27, 1689.

I have not received your letter; these delays mortify, but do not now alarm me; I am accustomed to the caprices

[1] Esprit Fléchier, Bishop of Nîmes, author of *The Life of Theodosius.*

of the post. I am quite of M. de Courtin's opinion; your presence would be very necessary at Court for your son; nothing is so certain, and this is one of the reasons that make us murmur against impossibilities; this is the cause of all obstacles and of all disasters. Do you recollect when we used sometimes to say, there is nothing so ruinous as the want of money? we perfectly understood each other. But will not the little Colonel pay you a visit? what can prevent him, after having returned thanks, and paid his court for a short time? I expect to hear from you upon this subject; you can never enter too fully into everything that concerns you; it is my true interest.

I should also be glad to hear some Lambesc news, and what humiliation M. d'Arles has suffered from the wooden arm upon his seat, which did not seem to me to touch him; I am still of the same opinion. I forgot on Wednesday to enclose a note of condolence, which I had written to poor Madame du Janet. I have sent it to Paris, and you will receive it by way of Poirier; I find I have some feelings for Provence, which lead me to believe that I shall some day return thither. Madame de La Fayette informs me of the preparations she is making for her son's nuptials. She has converted her little chamber into a drawing-room, she has given me an idea of it, give me one of yours; I know not what you, or Pauline wears; if I were to see you pass, I should not know you.

We are reading the *Life of Theodosius*; my son increases its value by his manner of reading it; it is really the finest piece of writing I ever met with; the style is admirable; but such a book lasts us only two days; I had read it, and yet it was new to me. I should be sorry, for instance, if Pauline had no taste for history; romances should only be foils to such productions, otherwise they are pernicious. Madame de Marbeuf accommodates herself to our reading; and we accommodate ourselves to her card-table, when there are performers: she is a worthy, generous woman, who is capable of loving, and who adores you. The Abbé Charrier is gone for a few days to a living

he has near Vitré; I really sometimes admire the goodness of Providence towards me; he is so necessary to me in the business I have to transact in Lower Brittany, that if he were at present at Lyons, as he ought naturally to be, I know not what I should do.

Madame de Chaulnes has received a brief from her friend the Pope, conceived in the most obliging terms possible. Popes do not usually allow that they are indebted for their exaltation to anyone; but you will find that his present Holiness does not hesitate to say that he owes it to the Ambassador according to the King's intentions. I enclose you a copy of this brief; my son says it is badly translated, but the sense is good. The Abbé Bigorre has sent me the Holy Father's picture; I doubt not that he will send you one also; his countenance promises longevity. If Avignon had been held upon his life, it would have remained with us a considerable time: but that *churl* to die at the end of the first year! you, however, made so good a use of that *source of all justice,* that I thought heaven would preserve it for you; but we are not acquainted with the secrets of that country; the only certainty is, that we must submit to them. Coulanges paid his compliments to the Pope in Italian: he was in the circle of the first audience, when the Ambassador was accompanied through the streets by fifty coaches, and a great crowd of people; it was a very fine sight, and after having received from the Pope every paternal attention in public, he was shut up with His Holiness two hours in his private sanctum; what passed is still a secret. Coulanges then paid his short compliment, the Holy Father answered with much good humour and politeness; he told him he had heard of Madame de Coulanges, and that she must come to Rome with Madame de Chaulnes; this will not be forgotten. A pretty girl said a ridiculous thing the other day at Rennes, very much in the style of Madame de Coulanges's epigrams. You know M. de La Trémouille with his fine figure and plain face; he was looking at another lady, to whom he was playing off the lover, and turned his back upon her; in-

stead of being embarrassed, she said with great sprightliness, "*It is certainly to me he is making love.*" Is not this Madame de Coulanges herself? But such sallies are agreeable everywhere, when they are natural. These are trifles, indeed, my dear child; we might enter upon more serious subjects; but they would be melancholy, and we are very distant from each other: you know how sensibly they affect me; this is enough for a day in which I have nothing to answer. Inform me what the Major-Generals sell their regiments for. Adieu, my best and dearest child; tell me a few particulars of your health in the *gazette* style; for you have countries, alas! which were formerly much ravaged; give me some account of them; I cannot reflect upon former times without emotion, and gratitude to God.

LETTER 951

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, November 30, 1689.

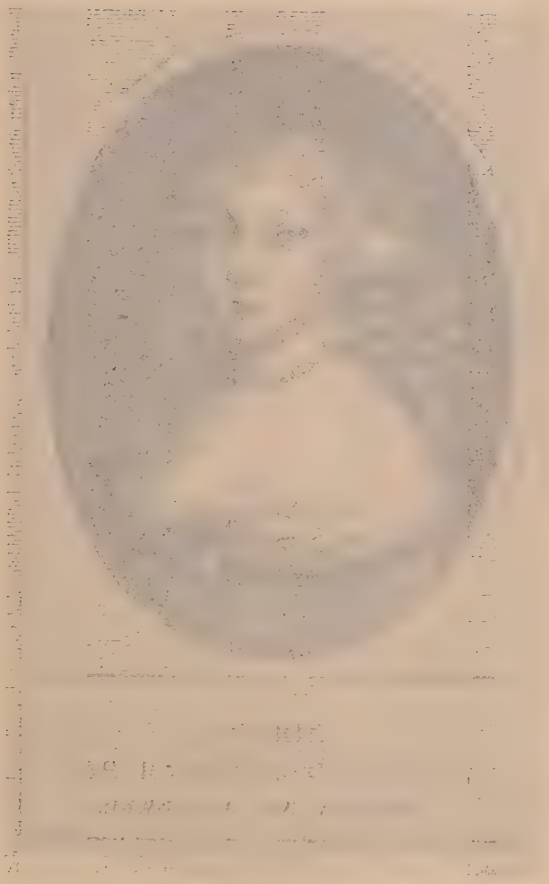
How much I am obliged to you for having sent me M. de Saint-Pouanges's letter! It is a pleasure to see, really to see, an attestation of the wisdom and merit of our Marquis, formed expressly for this age; you are not forgotten in it: I am delighted at having read this letter, and I return it you with a thousand thanks. I have no doubt that you will be allowed to sell the Marquis's corps, and I wait for this joyful event.

I always interest myself in what concerns the Chevalier; not because he amuses himself with reading and liking my letters; on the contrary, I take the liberty of laughing at him for this; but because his head is very well turned, and agrees wonderfully well with his heart: but how is it, since he is fond of this kind of reading, that he does not give himself the pleasure of perusing your letters before you send them? They are truly worthy of his attention. When I show them to my son and his wife, we

feel their beauty. My friend Guébriac saw the passage respecting La Montbrun the other day; it very much surprised him; it was a lively and amusing picture. In short, my child, it is fortunate that my letters please you; how often otherwise would you be tired! M. de Grignan has not then lent me his assistance in that, where I spoke of the masterly stroke of having deprived the Pope-maker of the nomination of Deputies for the Governor of Brittany. I am sure that neither the Chevalier nor you could fail to be convinced of the truth of what I said: that blood which circulates so warmly in the Chevalier's veins, could not be frozen with regard to the interests of great Lords and Governors of Provinces. I also hope that he has adopted my sentiments upon the ill-judged pride of the Archbishopric of Arles, for the Archbishop is out of the question; but I perhaps flatter myself in vain upon these occasions: I should, however, like this ingenuousness, if united to so many good things; and, if it were in my favour, I should be quite proud of it. Let us now talk of his gout and fever; they seem to reign alternately, the gout in the place of fever, the fever in the place of gout; he may choose; and I am of your opinion, that the reigning power is always the most disagreeable; in short, it is a great misfortune that such a man should be obliged to keep his bed.

So then you were struck with an expression of Madame de La Fayette's, blended with so much friendship [1]. Though I say to myself that this is a truth which should not be forgotten, I confess I was all astonishment at it; for I yet feel no sort of decay that puts me in mind of it. I cannot, however, refrain from calculating and reflecting, and I find the conditions of life are very hard. It seems to me that I have been dragged against my will to the fatal period, when *old age* must be endured; I see it, I have attained it; and I would, at least, contrive not to go beyond it, not to advance in the road of infirmities, pain, loss of memory, *disfigurements* which are ready to lay hold

[1] This expression was, "You are old." See Letter 935, of 8th October, 1689, in this volume.



[illegible] La Montbrun the other day, it very much surprised him; it was a lively and amusing picture. In short, [illegible] child, it is fortunate that my letters please you; how [illegible] otherwise would you be [illegible] Gregnan has not then lent me [illegible] of the [illegible] stroke [illegible] of the nomination of Deputies for the [illegible] of Brittany. I am sure [illegible] Chevalier [illegible] you could fail to be convinced [illegible] of what I said; that blood which circulates [illegible] the Chevalier's veins, could not be frozen [illegible] interests of great Lords and Governors [illegible] I also hope that he has adopted [illegible] judged pride of the Archbishopric [illegible] Archbishop is out of the question; [illegible] in vain upon these occasions: [illegible] ingenuousness, if united to so [illegible] if it were in my favour, I should [illegible] us now talk of his gout and fe[illegible] alternately, the gout in the place of [illegible] of gout; he may choose; and I [illegible] power is always the [illegible] misfortune that [illegible] his bed.

[illegible] an expression of Ma[illegible] with so much friendship [1]. [illegible] this is a truth which should [illegible] I was all astonishment at it; [illegible]

[illegible] contrive not to [illegible] in the road of infirmities, pai[illegible] to lay hold

[1] This expression [illegible] "You are old" [illegible] of 8th October, 1683, in this volume.

Peint par Pelletier. Tiré du Cabinet de Mr C.F.A de Nussey Gravé par C.L Masquelier

of me; and I hear a voice which says, "You must go on, in spite of yourself; or, if you will not, you must die, an alternative at which nature recoils." Such, however, is the fate of those who have reached a certain period: but a return to the will of God, and to that universal law which is imposed upon us, restores reason to its place, and makes us call in patience to our aid: summon it also, my dearest child; and let not your too affectionate heart excite you to shed tears which reason must condemn.

I had no great difficulty in refusing the offers of my friends; I had only to answer them, *Paris is in Provence,* as you said, *Paris is in Brittany*; but it is extraordinary that you should feel it in the same way I did. Paris, then, is so truly in Provence with respect to me, that I would not this year be anywhere else than where I am. *Passing the winter at "The Rocks"* sounds terrific: alas! my child, it is the most agreeable thing in the world; I sometimes laugh, and say, "This, then, is what is called passing a winter in the woods." Madame de Coulanges said to me, the other day, "Leave your *damp* 'Rocks'!" "*Damp*"! I replied: "you are damp, if you please; Brevannes is damp, but we are upon an eminence; you might as well say, 'Your damp Montmartre'." When the sun shines, it penetrates on every side into these woods; it is a dry soil, exposed to the direct rays of the meridian sun, so that the most delicate constitution could not take cold; and the setting sun has a fine effect from the end of a long grove: when it rains, we have a good room, a good fire, and two card-tables: this is now the case, as we have a good deal of company, who do not interrupt me, for I do as I please; when we have none, we are still better off, as reading affords a pleasure superior to every other. Madame de Marbeuf is very good; she enters into our taste; but she will not always be with us. I wished to tell you this, that your friendship might be at rest.

My daughter-in-law is delighted with what you say of her; I make no secret of it, and she desires me to say everything that is kind and grateful, in return for the

praises you bestow on her. M. de Courtin's friendship for you, claims many from me; he is an important friend, and not afraid of speaking in your behalf; but this is not a very proper time to request favours and gratifications, when considerable augmentations are asked on every side. Tell me what pensions are retrenched; not, I trust, M. de Grignan's, or a Menin's? If so, I shall be in despair. You will see M. du Plessis; he has written to me, and gives me to understand that his domestic plan does not succeed; and that instead of being comfortable and independent, as he expected, he has thought of nothing but quitting his house; so that he will be with M. de Vins, in Provence, for two months. He will relate his griefs to you; he seems to have been taken in with respect to interest; I am very sorry for it; tell me what you learn from him. You certainly ought to send me M. de Grignan's speech; as he is satisfied with it, I shall be still more so. Tell him how I summoned him to my aid, and upon what occasion. You spare me very much in your letters, I am aware of it; you pass slightly over things that are unpleasant, but I feel them as much as you do. It is a great comfort that the Chevalier is with you; he is the only person in whom you can confide, and the only one that can be more affected than yourself at what concerns you; he knows how worthy I am to talk with him upon this subject: we are so much in the same interest, that a natural union must necessarily subsist between us. A thousand kindnesses to my dear Pauline; I have a very good opinion of her little sprightliness, and her curtseys: you love her, you amuse yourself with her; this delights me; she answers your questions very humorously. Good heavens! my dear child, when will the time come that I shall see and embrace you, and that dear child also? I long for this period; I will inform you of the first prospect I have of it.

LETTER 952

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, December 4, 1689.

I thank you for your letter of the twenty-fourth of November; it is full of confidence and friendship, and informs me of what I wished to know. I told you that I showed my son only such letters as I chose he should see; this is certainly one of the number. We had some sensible people here the other day, who, on reading what relates to your son's regiment, in the *Gazette*, immediately exclaimed that the young Colonel would be of no expense to his father and mother; and that his two uncles, who were such great Lords, would certainly support him. I could not help shrugging my shoulders internally, and left them to think as they pleased. You cannot surprise me in speaking of the Chevalier's friendship and kindness; they are great indeed: it is he, I find, who wishes to furnish you with the means of paying him; this is a singular stratagem; but the difficulty consists in finding the money, though the security is good. Why could not M. de La Garde procure you this trifling sum? I find fault with everyone; no one exerts himself sufficiently. Would to God I were possessed of a small transferable sum! I would soon send it to you; but I have nothing but vile lands that produce stones instead of bread. I am, therefore, good for nothing but to talk, to find fault with what is amiss, to pity you, and feel keenly your misfortunes; alas! you see the rest; *and yet you see nothing, neither do I.* I conjure you to let me know the sequel of these important and urgent affairs: be not afraid of afflicting me; my sorrow is greater when I suffer alone, and am only informed of things generally. Your Assembly, I find, is to sit only a fortnight, and our States three weeks: their sittings will hereafter be still shorter, for the only object now is the free gift. M. d'Aix ought to be satisfied that M. d'Arles has resigned

his place to him: can this be called pride? It is so, however, and is highly gratifying to the Archbishop of Aix. These two prides, one of whom remains, and the other who goes away, will agree very well together. If M. d'Arles thinks he has caught M. d'Aix, he will be sure of success, for he always confounds his enemies upon these terms. I know not whether I shall be in a humour to write to M. d'Aix upon this Abbey; it is not better than my compliment. Tell me all that follows; and when you have found money to pay the Chevalier out of his own estate—ah, how easy it is to comprehend this feeling! I am not over-much pleased with the prudent La Garde; I do not find that generosity and gratitude are virtues he much practises; I wish they had their turn with the rest. Let me know when you have leave to sell the Marquis's corps.

How good it is of you to form Pauline's mind, and to teach her to dance! You will improve her more than Désairs; she has only to look at you, and imitate you. Is she tall? is she graceful? I thank her for not having confounded me with the grandmothers whom she hates: thank heaven, I escape! I very much approve the regimen and preservative which she takes, by her confessor's prescription, against the *Pastor Fido*; it is like the rhubarb and marmalade which I saw Madame de Pomponne take before dinner; but she afterwards ate mushrooms and salad, and adieu to the marmalade: you, dear Pauline, are to make the application. But do you not adore your dear and excellent mamma? Do you not think yourself happy in seeing her, looking at her, listening to her, and hearing her? Each of these words has its degree. I know not, my dear child, where M. de Grignan is, or where you are, or where the Chevalier is: you talked of a journey to Lambesc; the air of the small-pox always alarms me. Pay my compliments as you can; accept my son's; his wife will not write to you till you have obtained permission to sell your corps; she looks to the main chance: she is charmed with your friendship and approbation. Madame de Marbeuf is still here, and the Abbé Charrier; this is just the com-

pany we like: they send you a hundred thousand compliments. We have fine weather, and we walk; I wear your cloak, which I very much like, and it does me both honour and profit; it is admired and praised: *it is a present from my daughter.* Do not imagine that I am in a dark solitary wood, with an owl upon my head; this is not the idea: nothing passes so insensibly as a winter in the country; the prospect of it is worse than the reality. My health is still very good, give me a circumstantial account of yours.

LETTER 953

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, December 7, 1689.

I have told you, my dear child, that when once we are settled in the country, the months of November and December are not difficult to pass. Your north wind, however, greatly terrifies me; we have no such tempests here. I would not have you lose any of the good company that is now with you; and I could wish, if the Chevalier's health be not restored this winter, that he would spend it with you rather than in his little room at Paris: this would be a comfort to you both. You are resolved then to pass the winter at Grignan, leaving the game to M. d'Aix, and setting forth the reasons which prevent your holding your Court at Aix for three or four months, as was customary with M. de Grignan. But do you not hope to see your son this winter? I cannot conceive that anything can prevent his coming to you. My son and I were admiring, the other day, how you had pushed him forward in life, in order to fix him in the station that was so proper for him, the command of his uncle's regiment: all this has been very happily brought about, and M. de Grignan crowned all in sending him to make the first campaign at Philisbourg, which cost you so many tears. The academy, the musketeers, and even the corps of light horse, could not have ad-

vanced him so much as these three sieges with the Dauphin, and the contusion so prettily and so coolly received: in short, our utmost wishes have been hitherto accomplished; may God support and conduct the rest.

Madame de Vins has written to me respecting the regiment; like a true friend, she is delighted: she informs me that M. de Vins has taken M. du Plessis with him; this I knew, and told you; you will see him, and he will acquaint you with his grievances. It is easy to see that the poor man has been imposed upon; this is a pity; but marriage should not be engaged in so inconsiderately. The weather has been tremendous for these six days past. There are now two card-tables in my room, occupied by Madame de Marbeuf, the Abbé Charrier, and others: this is very well; when they are gone, we shall resume our books with pleasure. My health still continues good, you talk very superficially of yours; how are your spirits, your side, your colic? In short, are you handsome? for that determines all.

LETTER 954

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, December 11, 1689.

I begin by exclaiming against the *six deniers*; a sum I have never heard mentioned since the loan of the miser in Molière's play. I suppose you meant to say *six and a half* per cent. which I have heard of in Provence; but the former sum is so usurious, that I do not think a notary would draw up a contract upon such terms: it would be paying sixteen hundred and sixty-six livres and thirteen sols for ten thousand livres; which is not at all in the usual course of loans: in short, I stand in need of an explanation, for I cannot believe you at the first word. I agree with you in regard to the reasons that urge you more than all the bailiffs in Christendom to pay the Chevalier, not

only in part, but the two thous and pistoles [1]; nothing can be more just; I am quite of your opinion.

Like you, I have found all we have thought and felt, with regard to the little Abbey, very singular. Such a turn of fancy seldom occurs: you may call it childish weakness, or whatever you please; but it is certain that these Sanguins, this Villeneuve, the idea of old Pavin [2], our ancient acquaintances, are so confounded with our garden and forest, that it appears to me like the same thing, and not only as if we had lent it to them, but as if it were still our own, since we are certain of finding our furniture, and the same persons we so frequently saw there. In short, my child, we deserved Livry on account of the love we had, and still have, for that delightful retreat.

You praise me too highly for the quiet life I lead here; nothing gives me pain but your absence. If it be necessary to raise the value of this retreat, to give courage to certain people, I consent; but otherwise, you forget that Paris is in Provence for me, that everything is equal to me, that I could not pass my time better, and that I do not deserve praise for this journey, but for the one I took when I left you at Paris, and which maternal tenderness and policy, and the last commands of the good Abbé, to restore to my son the lands I had enjoyed, compelled me to take, five or six years ago. It was this that gave me real sorrow, because I quitted you; for which I was deservedly punished by a narrow escape from being drowned, and a sore leg. At present, my love, my expenses sleep, or rather slumber, for I have always my house and little household at Paris, and am at some expense here [3]; but all this is so trifling, that I find means to remit some money, which is a relief to my mind, and calls those charming virtues, which you so highly extol, into action. When I have settled, as I hope to do, my affairs in Brittany, I shall

[1] The price of the regiment.

[2] Denis Sanguin de Saint-Pavin, one of the most pleasing poets of his time, died in 1670.

[3] Madame de Sévigné paid her son for her board and rooms.

think of nothing but going to meet you. I shall pass through Paris, which is the theatre of all nations, and perhaps, by that time, you will think of coming thither. In short, we shall see what Providence ordains with respect to our plans; we must do as well as we can till the autumn of *ninety*. The journey of my son and his wife to Bourbon, seems to me like a vision. This, my dear child, is all I can say to you to-day.

The little Colonel has written to me, to his uncle, and his *cousin* [1], to inform us of his promotion. He had not yet received our congratulatory letter. He owns that he is delighted to find himself at the head of such a handsome troop, and to be able to say, *my regiment*; that this is somewhat juvenile, but he is only eighteen. He tells us how the last years of his life have been hurried on; I would send you this letter, but I like it so much, that I am unwilling to part with it. You seem to be more apprehensive for me, at being the *grandam* of a Colonel, than of a Captain of cavalry: you carry your affection too far, my dear Comtesse; I have more courage than you have, and I would willingly be so to a married Colonel; if he were to have a son by the end of the year, I should be delighted. We should accustom ourselves to think of the worst that can happen; there are some passages in your letters, upon this subject, so affectionate and so natural, that they call forth a gratitude and tenderness that are not easily described; we must say, as you do sometimes, *God knows it*.

I have spoken to you of Madame de Coulanges, but what you say is more to the purpose. It is true that this sin of hers will not fail to find indulgence; she will turn this new friend (Alexander VIII.) to whatever purpose she pleases, and he will, for some time, be the *best piece in her purse*; but I give you back your own words, "She is my friend, you know it well; you will not betray me." Madame de La Fayette informs me that Madame de Coulanges is in a good road, and that she will endeavour to

[1] The young Marquise de Sévigné thought herself too little to be called *aunt*.

get into one also [1], as soon as her son is married. Tell me, my dear Comtesse, how you contrive to pass the winter in your Castle, upon that mountain, with hurricanes that make one tremble. M. de Grignan will very much regret the loss of Madame d'Oppède's charming society. For my part, I sink quietly to the grave, in these woods: I sometimes do not stir out of my room for a whole week. I never think of it when it rains; and when it is fine, it is like summer, on account of the fineness of the soil; for the last two days, the sun has been warm and brilliant; it is very mild; this is the weather in which I walk. At length, you would approve my conduct; what can be more comprehensive than this? For three weeks past we have had very pleasant and accommodating visitors; I mean, the Abbé Charrier and Madame de Marbeuf. They leave us tomorrow: they send you a thousand thousand compliments; I could have wished that you had answered the first, but you did not suppose they would have stayed here so long. Cards enliven a house; I fear that yours have cost you some money, as well as M. de Grignan, for I know your ill luck.

I have been very much surprised that your Province should so considerably have increased its present to the King: when M. de Grignan entered upon his office, it was only a hundred thousand crowns, and after the first year, it was five hundred thousand. We have received an edict from Paris respecting the tontine. The King, the Dauphin, and MONSIEUR, have sent all their plate to the mint, which will produce some millions, and furnish money, which was very much wanted. You calculate in the midst of your disorder, my dear child, and turn your thesis in every possible way; this shows a vein of the solid understanding of the poor *worthy*; it is always much better to know what we are doing, than to live as if we were blind, deaf, and dumb.

[1] That is, that she was becoming religious, by giving a few hours less to the world, and a few more to the church and directors of conscience.

By the bye, talking of deafness, I entreat you to make the Chevalier dread as much as I do, this sort of family disorder. Another by the bye, respecting family: M. de Lamoignon has obtained the reversion of M. de Némond's post; it belonged to the late first President; the King has wrought this miracle; for *Guillaume* thought that the word *reversion* would kill him. I am delighted that our neighbour [1] has at length obtained this post, and will not die in his own. Your son is in a strange place, *Kaysers-Lautern* [2]; if this were a Breton word, it could not be worse. He tells us he is going to apply himself to reading; he is right, for it is a disgraceful thing to be ignorant; since he loves war, he must like the histories that treat of it; advise him to employ his time usefully while he remains in that strange city. But will he not pay you a visit? I shall be as much surprised as you to see him once more a firebrand with the tone of a commander: *God preserve him.*

Monsieur DE SÉVIGNÉ *also writes to his Sister.*

(*Enclosed in his Mother's letter.*)

I am quite of your opinion, my dear little sister; I assure you, I think no more of the deputation, since, to obtain it, I must have again become a courtier or a warrior. It was not properly settled, that, in order to attain this dignity, one of these qualities was absolutely necessary; and the moment I found it was so, I thought of nothing but retiring from the post to which I had been appointed, and returned more pleased than ever with my humble retreat; but I do not give up the pleasure of paying you a visit, which I long for more impatiently than I can express. Madame de Mauron [3] talks of a journey to Bourbon, as a settled thing, and intends to take her daughter and me with her: this journey does not yet form any part

[1] Chrétien-François de Lamoignon, son of Guillaume de Lamoignon, first President of the Parliament of Paris, was Advocate-General, and afterwards President *à mortier* to the Parliament of Paris.

[2] A town of Germany in the Lower Palatinate, upon the little river Lauter. It is also called Caselouter.

[3] M. de Sévigné's mother-in-law.

of my mother's plan; we shall see how Providence will arrange them both. I am glad that you are satisfied with your sister-in-law; I can assure you I envied her very much the pleasure of my mother's society, which I should infinitely have preferred to the mad gaieties of the States. We have paid our compliments to the new Colonel, who has also written to us very prettily, to inform us of his new dignity; he seems as proud of it as a young man of his age must naturally be. God knows how heartily I wish him success; I wish it as much as I do health to his father, whom I embrace most affectionately, and you too, my lovely little sister.

LETTER 955

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, December 14, 1689.

If the Chevalier read your letters, he would not seek for amusement in those that come from such a distance. What you told me the other day of Livry—which we have lent to M. Sanguin, allowing him even to make a fountain there,—this whole passage, the one concerning Madame de Coulanges, and even your expressions of regard, are animated and agreeable. I admire the sprightliness of your style in the midst of so much thorny, perplexing, overwhelming business; really, my dear child, all the admiration is due to you, and not to me. I am alone like a violet, easily concealed; I hold no place, no rank in the world, except in your heart, which I esteem more than all the rest, and in the hearts of my friends. What I do is not difficult to perform; but for you, in the rank you hold, in the most brilliant and most populous Province in France, to unite economy with the magnificence of a Governor, is scarcely credible, and I cannot believe it will last long, particularly with your son's expenses, which every day increase. As these thoughts often disturb my repose, I fear that you, being nearer the abyss, are still more sub-

ject to painful reflections; this, my dear Comtesse, is my only grief, for solitude is not at all irksome to me. Our pleasant visitors have left us; I have, at the same time, driven away my son and his wife; the former is gone to his aunt's, the other to pay a long-neglected visit. I have sent them both their different ways; this has pleased me highly: we shall meet again in two days, and shall relish each other's society the more. I am not indeed alone, for I am beloved in this country; I had a visit yesterday from two very pleasant men, both *Molinists*; I was not tired of them. I have books, workmen, fine weather; if my dear child were more comfortable, what, with the hope of seeing her again, could I desire?

I have written to the Marquis, though I had before paid him my compliments of congratulation: I entreat him to read in that gloomy garrison, where he has nothing to do; I tell him that since he is fond of war, it is unnatural to have no inclination to see books on the subject, and to be acquainted with persons who excelled in the art. I scold him, I torment him, and I hope we shall work a reformation: this will be the first door he ever refused to open to us. I am not so uneasy at his being fond of his bed, knowing he will never fail in what concerns his fame, as I am at his being fond of gaming. I point out that this is certain ruin: if he plays but little, he can lose but little; but it is a small rain that makes us wet through: if he plays often, he will find himself deceived, he must pay; and if he has no money, he must either forfeit his word, or break in upon his necessary expenses. We are unlucky too from ignorance; for, without being cheated, it happens that we almost constantly lose. In short, my child, it would be a bad thing both for him, and for you, who would feel the effects of it. The Marquis, therefore, would be fortunate to have a taste for reading, like Pauline, who is charmed to learn and improve. Delightful, happy disposition! which places us out of the reach of ennui and idleness, two hateful monsters. Romances are soon read; I could wish Pauline to have some order in the choice of histories, that

she would begin at one end, and finish at the other, and thus acquire a slight but general knowledge of everything. Do you say nothing to her respecting geography? We will resume this conversation another time. D'Avila[1] is admirable, but we like him better when we are a little acquainted with what leads to that period, such as Louis XII., Francis I., and so on. It is your place, my child, to govern and correct; it is your duty, and you know it. With respect to everything else, I have no doubt that in a very short time you will make her very amiable and pleasing; good sense, and an earnest desire of obliging you, are sufficient.

You tell me you expected M. de Vins to dinner; had you not been apprised of it, you would have been astonished to see M. du Plessis behind him: he will relate his grievances to you; he has told them to me in part, and led me to expect the remainder. He seems to me cheated and duped with regard to fortune, and has so great an inclination to be rid of his *Dorimène*, that I could guess the rest, though he has assured me her honour is in no way impeached; God grant it may be so! This is very foolish nevertheless; for there are things which should be undertaken seriously and prudently; for instance, marriage. M. de La Fayette was married the day before yesterday, (Monday the twelfth), and was to return to dinner at his mother's, and to sleep at M. de Marillac's; supposing then, as I believe, there is a young Comtesse de La Fayette, you may think you hear your son say, "I have been dancing all night with Madame de La Fayette; I have played at battledore, and a thousand other games, with her; I have run races with her." How this would surprise you! The young Comtesse is very lively, and the Marquis is one of her first friends. Our Madame de La Fayette approves and wishes to imitate everything the Chevalier does; she loves and esteems him; but the Chevalier's miserable gout renders him

[1] Author of *A History of the Civil Wars of France,* which contains all the memorable events from the death of Henri II. in 1559, to the peace of Vervins in 1598.

proud, and almost insensible to all my friend's advances. Here is a great deal of idle chat, my dear child; but I know you like it, and are not sorry that you have given me an afternoon's amusement.

LETTER 956

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, December 18, 1689.

Noble lady, have I not done well to send you the apostolic love-letter of the Holy Father to Madame de Chaulnes? You make me remark, that he does not mention the Holy Ghost in the election of a Pope; I had only observed the sincere avowal he makes of being indebted to France and the Ambassador for his election; this alone, added to the praises and friendship with which he honours our Duchesse, appeared to me worthy of attention. I have no fear that the Holy Ghost will be offended at being so little celebrated in the Conclave; he knows very well, and so do we, that it is he who creates them: we, the disciples of Providence, are not to be deceived, and we know by how many ways, how many agents, and how many wills, he constantly performs what he determines. I have a high opinion of the letter you are writing to M. Pelletier, without knowing either the particulars or the subject; and I am persuaded that you make a very good use of this Holy Ghost, which has deprived you of Avignon. Your son appears to me an officer of great consequence; his place is enviable, and surpasses what you could have expected at his age; all the measures were so just and so well taken, that not a moment has been lost; no crosses, but the most agreeable circumstances, have attended him; in short, my dear, if you are not satisfied, I know not what will please you, and this corps which you are going to sell seems to crown the whole. I plainly perceive that the Marquis will remain some time at Kaysers-Lautern: these winter wars

are sometimes as useful as campaigns; we make ourselves known: the neighbourhood of Mayence is a confidential post; you wrote in this idea, since you have scruples about the courage which you display by your fireside; it is the Chevalier's society that has given you this martial disposition. I can fancy I see the poor gentleman with his paws across, like the lion with which you paid your court so well to the Prince; but I am convinced that a winter in Provence, under your fine sun, will benefit his health surprisingly. I know, at least, that the last winters he spent at Paris were very severe. We have hitherto no reason to complain of this; there has been no snow, no glazed frost, but fine sunshine: I walk every day, the woods are still very pleasant, and everything so well planted and arranged, that it seems as if the leaves had fallen only that the sun might shine through the avenues, and that we might enjoy our rambles. I sung the other day,

Pour qui, cruel Hiver, gardes-tu tes rigueurs [1]?

I was delighted to find that it was not for you; but let us wait the conclusion, for you know that from the extremity of the horizon, may come *the most furious of the dreadful children of the North* [2]; you are but too well acquainted with him, he has committed dreadful ravages with you; but, under the name of *bise* [3], continue to enjoy his absence; this is a great advantage. You have given me an idea of a sound sleep, at the end of a long walk, which has very much pleased me; for in the number of thoughts that may agitate you, I am always afraid of your having no sleep after four in the morning, as I know has often been the case with you; such warm blood would but ill agree with Provence; I cannot recommend too strongly to you the care of your health, if you value mine, which is still excellent. I thought M. du Plessis would surprise you behind M. de Vins; here I expected you would be caught;

[1] For whom, cruel Winter, dost thou reserve thy rigours? [Translation.]

[2] From La Fontaine's Fable of *The Oak and the Reed.*

[3] The north-east wind.

but to be close-shaved, with large dirty boots, is a ridiculous contrast. He has written to me from Grignan, and is delighted with your goodness, your magnificence, and the charms of your little Pauline. What harmony there is throughout her person! what an animated countenance! what becoming vivacity! what fine blue eyes, with black eye-lashes! what a graceful easy figure! she must either be striking or very interesting, I know not exactly which; pray tell me.

What say you to the example the King has set of melting down all his beautiful plate? Our Duchesse du Lude is quite in despair, she has sent hers; Madame de Chaulnes her table and candlestick-stands; and Madame de Lavardin the plate from Rome, convinced that her husband will not return there again: see if you can do anything upon this occasion. I send you a letter from M. du Plessis, in order to fix your imagination; do not appear to have seen it, nor mention it to him; confine your censures to deceit and mercenary views, but say not a word of the *cow and the calf*. I sincerely pity the poor man: matrimony is a very dangerous disorder; *I had rather drink*.

I could not comprehend how my letter to Madame du Janet could find its way back; the reason is excellent; I will keep it for the first time her husband dies, for I could say nothing else upon the occasion. You scold me for taking what you say too seriously; yet who could suppose that a man in Provence, where you are, could be well, when you assure me he is dead? I shall be more careful in future, even at a less distance than Provence. I have corrected you, at least, with regard to the commissions. I make them at the moment, and this is not like poor Janet's case, in which there is no loss but that of a letter. My dear child, I recommend you to take care of yourself, at these critical times; keep yourself quiet, if you love me. My son and his wife are both returned from their excursions; they appear so glad to find me here, that I pity them for having left me. My daughter-in-law has got the head-ache; she was overturned in her little journey, and received some bruises,

and two of her beautiful horses, which were taken off, are lost, and no tidings are yet heard of them: my son is very much vexed. The little household is in affliction. They will write to you on Wednesday.

LETTER 957

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, December 21, 1689.

I go back, my dear Comtesse, to the place where I left off on Sunday. The beautiful little horses galloped away, without stopping for a considerable time, like youth when it is not held with a tight rein. At length, one was found at Vitré, in a farm: the people at Vitré were astonished at seeing this little creature at night, in a great heat, completely harnessed; and wished to gain some intelligence of her, respecting my son. Do you recollect the circumstance of *Rinaldo's* horse, which *Orlando* found running with his harness without his master? What an affliction! he knew not of whom to inquire; at length, he addressed himself to the horse: *Dimmi caval gentil, che di Rinaldo, il tuo caro signore, è divenuto*[1]. I do not know *Rabicano's* answer; but I assure you that our two little animals are very frolicsome in the stable, to the great satisfaction *del caro signore*[2].

Monsieur DE SÉVIGNÉ *also writes to his Sister.*

(Enclosed in his Mother's letter.)

It is true that I received great satisfaction from the two little horses being again in good health in their stable; and still more, from your sister-in-law having quite recovered from her fall, after a headache for two days: such little accidents are useful, to make us know the value of

[1] Tell me, gentle steed, what is become of Rinaldo, thy dear Lord. [Translation.]

[2] Of their dear Lord. [Translation.]

being relieved from them. I think, my beautiful little sister, that you are not sufficiently affected at the King's goodness, in allowing you to sell your corps. Here is your son promoted to the rank of a Colonel, almost free of expense to you; he will have good winter-quarters, both as Captain and Colonel, till he finds some one who is disposed to give him twelve thousand livres. This is all, I think, that you could have wished for upon the occasion. And what better could you desire for Pauline, than to see her honourably settled at your estate of Avignon, with a lover who adores her, and who was the first that sung her praises, and made her name known in foreign lands? Adieu, my charming little sister.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *the Younger also writes to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

(*Enclosed in Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ'S *letter.*)

I swear to you, my dear sister, that I will never leave Madame de Sévigné again; I fall down, I am overturned, my head is broken, the moment I leave her protection: but I am much more sensible to the prosperities of my pretty *cousin*, than to my own little misfortunes. I wish Pauline's days may be woven with gold and silk, but not that she may pass them with her Roman lover.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *continues and concludes her letter to her Daughter.*

Coulanges has written me a long entertaining letter; he must have written to you at the same time. He has sent me some verses, which I honour; for he introduces in them all the glorious periods of Rome, which I also honour; he is cheerful, contented, and the favourite of M. de Turenne [1]. How do you like this name? He is in love with Pauline, requests the Pope's leave to marry her, and entreats His Holiness to give him Avignon, which he will

[1] Louis de La Tour, Prince de Turenne, died on the 4th of August, 1692, of the wounds he had received the preceding day in the battle of Steinkirk. He was at Rome in 1689.

restore to your family; she will be called the Comtesse of Avignon. At length, he says, that old age surrounds him: he doubts of some things on account of certain calculations; but he maintains that he is not sensible of it, either bodily or mentally; and I, in turn, assure you that I feel as he does, and that I do myself justice only by reflection. I am more uneasy about your health than my own. How comes it, my dear child, that you are afflicted with colic, which compels you to keep your bed? You were not so ill at Paris; would not the waters Pauline took this summer be of service to you? I heard at Bourdelot, that the waters of Forges, with cooling medicines, are infinitely preferable to hot medicines, which thicken the blood, and add fuel to fire. You will, perhaps, laugh at these reflections; but do not treat them lightly, you who reason better than all the faculty: take coffee also into consideration; do you think it was injurious to you? This is dictated by my friendship and ignorance, and has no authority but experience.

I am very glad that you will have the Chevalier's company this winter; you stand in need of this comfort: not because he sees my letters, this is a distempered taste; nor that it may pay my court to him; but he has applied the hundred thousand livres exactly in the way he ought to do; it was the intention of the founders to give him the means of pushing his fortune, and to turn his military taste to good account. He has fulfilled his duty in this respect; and, with regard to reputation, has surpassed the most sanguine expectations: I say this without intending to displease him; he has found as much money as he has been able to spend, though far short of what he deserved; but he would not even have remained here, if God had not stopped him short in his career; and it is for his melancholy fate that the Marquis is to be pitied; for if it had been allowed its full extent, our child would have required no other assistance; but we must return to God submissively, and follow your maxims.

I ask you a thousand pardons, Chevalier, for what I

have taken the liberty of saying; why do you read my letters? *Do I speak to you?*

What say you to all the fine plate of the Duchesse du Lude, and that of many others, following the King's to the mint? The King's apartments have thrown three millions into trade, which altogether must make a great circulation. Madame de Chaulnes has sent her tables, with her two candlestick-stands, and her beautiful gilt toilet. The Abbé Bigorre has sent me the edict, with the increase in the value of money; ah! this it is that will enrich you, supposing your coffers are full. I have just written to M. de Lamoignon; I was willing to practise this stratagem, and content myself with a compliment; but I have repented.

Our readings are delightful. We have *Abbadie* [1], and also *The History of the Church*; this is marrying the lute to the voice. You are not fond of wagers; I know not how we could captivate you a whole winter here. You skim lightly, and are not fond of history; and we have no pleasure but when we are attached to our subject, and make it a business. Sometimes, by way of change, we read *Les Petites Lettres* of Pascal; good heavens! how delightful they are, and how well my son reads them! I constantly think of my daughter, and how worthy of her this extreme propriety of reasoning would be: but your brother says, you find that it is always the same thing: ah! so much the better; can there be a more perfect style, more finely wrought, more delicate unaffected raillery, or more nearly allied to *The Dialogues of Plato*, which are so very beautiful? And when, after the first ten letters, he addresses himself to the R. P.s [2], what seriousness! what solidity! what force! what eloquence! what a love of God and of truth! what a way of supporting it, and of making it understood! All this is to be found in the last eight letters, which are very different from the former. I am persuaded you never did more than glance over them, select-

[1] Author of *La Verité de la Religion Chrétienne.*

[2] The Jesuits.

ing the most beautiful passages; but they should be read leisurely. Tell me whether the Marquis will not have good winter-quarters; this will be a consolation. I do not think that the Chevalier will quite desert this regiment, or that M. de Montégut will discontinue his good advice to the young Colonel.

LETTER 958

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Saturday, for Sunday, Christmas-day, 1689.

I wish you a Happy Christmas, and that you may be more just to me next year, than you have been at the close of this. How can you suppose I can guess at M. de La Garde's situation, unless you acquaint me with it? It is only three days ago I learned that he no longer enjoys the pension of eight thousand livres; I told you it grieved and surprised me. To-day, you add, that his estate, which produced ten thousand livres, now brings him in but two thousand; this makes a great difference. How could I conceive any such drawback, when I always saw the Chevalier remit him such considerable sums upon the score of his pension? I did not know they were diminished; I thought his estate altogether was worth ten thousand livres a year, and, considering the little expense at which he lived, I said he was a rich man, quite at his ease; he might, therefore, very easily have lent my daughter some money to pay her friend the Chevalier de Grignan: this thought was neither unjust nor ridiculous, ignorant as I was, of what had happened to this poor man. This is the medium through which things appeared to me, thinking favourably of your estates in Provence, compared with ours. I must have been folly and injustice itself, to have said what you reproach me with, if I had known what I learn only by your last two letters; they, indeed, have very much changed my opinion; I am now only affected on account of the part I take in such afflict-

ing circumstances, and with deserved admiration at so much courage and resignation to the will of God. You describe to me a true saint, the most Christian-like virtue, which greatly increases the esteem I always entertained for him. Never was there such devotion as his, and if I am fortunate enough to see him some day, it will give me true pleasure; but, once more, how could I guess? You had even represented him so uneasy as to want to sell his estate; in fine, I should have deserved to be scolded more than I can express, if I had written as I did, after knowing what you have just told me. You did not date your letters regularly; you imagined the feathered tribe had been the bearers of your last letters, or you forgot how distant we were from each other. Do me justice, therefore, and believe that I would not so much have wronged M. de La Garde's virtue and situation. I take this opportunity to wish him the compliments of the Season, and to assure him of the continuance of my ancient friendship; it is a long time since I said anything particular to him. I think you happy in being able to afford him consolation in his retreat, as he does to you. I thought he was almost always at La Garde; I can easily suppose his company is agreeable; but when you tell me that you like bad company better than none, and that you wish your house were full, you are quite unintelligible.

Your account of the Chevalier's gout greatly excites my pity. The waters of Balaruc, then, have afforded him no relief? This is melancholy, indeed; I wish him a portion of M. de La Garde's resignation: tell him how much I am grieved at his situation. Inform me of the state of your health; I passed too lightly over the colic which made you keep your bed; is this the colic that is not dangerous, though painful? Coulanges has written the same nonsense to me that he has to you; and I have approved that upon his marrying Pauline, he should restore to your family the fine estate of Avignon, which you have so long possessed; how pleasant it would have been to you for eight or ten years longer! It is said that the Pope wishes

the King to notify publicly that he disavows the Assembly of eighty-two, at which two Grignans assisted, and where infallibility was mentioned; this would be a strange affair. This news does not come from the Abbé Bigorre; I long to receive his letters. The Rochefoucauld Mansion is half burnt down: the grand apartment, with many goods and papers have been destroyed. Madame de Lavardin is very much grieved at the accident, and she also tells me that Madame de La Fayette is seized with such a violent colic and pain in her side, that she is an object of compassion; her health is in a deplorable state. I consider M. de La Trousse to be in a very bad way, let people say what they please.

I salute and embrace M. de Grignan; it is long since I saw him. He could not do less than pay a visit to his *Alcine* in her enchanted Castle; I wish she may spend the winter there, that he may have no regret at Aix. We are here alone, with charming books, which afford us so much pleasure, that I cannot help pitying your want of taste for reading; for I must tell you, my dear child, that you are not fond of reading, and that your son inherits this distaste from you: I tell you this in revenge for what you said to me.

When your son is at Paris and Versailles, he will salute the King, all the Ministers, and the whole Court. Whatever esteem I entertain for him, I could wish him an uncle only for this first winter; I praise him for his docility; he has written to us very prettily on the pleasure he naturally feels at saying, *my regiment*; in fact, such a station is highly agreeable at eighteen years of age. I pay my compliments to M. de Grignan, as he is the source of the promotion, by sending him to make the first campaign of Philisbourg. Tell me something of that dear Comte, whom I have claimed in my letters, and who has abandoned me. Will not your dear son pay you a visit? Let me know when you have sold your corps. My son desires to be remembered to you affectionately; he is an admirable and indefatigable reader, never being tired of fine writ-

ing, though he has read it over and over again. Your sister-in-law has a *souris*[1], which does very well in her black hair; what a whim! but I think it would be a greater one to write any longer; we ought to think of conscience, read M. Le Tourneux, and recollect ourselves.

LETTER 959

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, December 28, 1689.

We have had the finest weather in the world here till Christmas-eve; I was at the end of the long avenue, admiring the beauty of the sun, when, on a sudden, I saw a dark poetical cloud issue from the west, into which the sun plunged himself, and at the same time a thick fog arose, and so I flew into the house. I have not been out of my chamber or the Chapel till to-day, when the dove has brought the olive-branch; the earth has resumed its colour, the sun has crept again from his cell, and will also send me forth from mine: for you may depend upon it, my dear child, since you are solicitous about my health, that when the weather is bad, I take my seat by the fireside, reading and chatting with my son and his wife. Have you not observed, as we have, that the days have not been so short as usual? I heard this remark made at Paris, three or four years since. The Abbé Têtu mentioned it at the Observatory, saying that the day formerly closed at five o'clock, and that now one might still read till that hour. We have experienced this truth here, where there is nothing to distract our attention, so that my son reads every day till five, and it is light till half after: this is a proper subject for a letter which requires no answer. Beaulieu informs me that our Marquis is expected; I am impatient to know a thousand particulars respecting him, and to compare the difference between a Colonel and our little musketeer.

[1] The name of a fashion.

A thousand reports have been spread concerning Rome, equally false, according to the different interest and malice of the propagators. The courier is, at length, arrived; and instead of all these prophecies, you find that the Pope consents to the Abbey of St. Denis being united to St.-Cyr without any gratuity, which would amount to eighty thousand livres; this is no trifling *douceur*, and will embarrass those who are still inclined to consider the Ambassador as a dupe, and to think Cardinal d'Estrées is in the right to question the good dispositions of the Pope. The beginning is in our favour, we shall see the end. I sometimes throw the Abbé Bigorre's little notes into your packets, who is very well informed of what passes at Rome; I suppose you have no objection to this.

Madame de Coulanges informs me that the new Madame de La Fayette was reclined upon a magnificent bed in a noble house; the room hung with beautiful tapestry belonging to the Keeper of the Seals [1]; the bed decorated with an ancient mantle of the Order, and the room hung with fine tapestry, having the arms ornamented with the staves of the Maréchal of France, and the collar of the Order; looking-glasses, chandeliers, glass-plates, and crystals, according to the present fashion, out of number; a great many servants, and *valets-de-chambre* in livery; the bride in an elegant dress. In short, such taste reigns in the house of the new-married couple and in their family, that our Madame de La Fayette ought to be perfectly satisfied at her son's having formed so great and honourable an alliance. The poor bride was all this while very ill with the colic, which made her extremely weak, having been bled twice. At length, Croisilles informs me that the fever has left her, and that her friends begin to breathe again.

I am very impatient, my dear child, for your letter of Friday, that I may hear how you are, and how the Chevalier is, whom you have represented in excruciating pain:

[1] Michel de Marillac, great-great-grandfather of Marie-Madeleine de Marillac, Marquise de La Fayette, was Keeper of the Seals of France; and Louis de Marillac, brother of the Keeper of the Seals, was Maréchal of France.

whatever passes at Grignan is a subject of interest to me. I consider you fortunate in having such good society; you have never yet spent a winter at Grignan: it will be of service to your affairs, you will not feel the fury of the north wind amidst your whole family. I return to the great errors in which you left me with regard to that saint, La Garde. I thought him possessed of an income of twenty-eight thousand livres; his estate ten thousand, his pension eighteen thousand: I supposed that in such a situation, a little assistance might be given to his intimate friends upon so important an occasion. I was even a little uneasy at his desire of selling his estate; at length the amount of all this is, that his pension is not paid, and his estate is no longer of any value; a greater fall cannot possibly be. I have told you of my repentance for having judged so ill; I love, honour, and admire, the courage and virtue of this holy disciple of Providence. Tell me if many pensions have been retrenched, and if there be no hopes that they will some day be continued. It will be difficult to pass the interval.

The beautiful Duchesse du Lude has taken all her fine silver furniture to pieces; Beaulieu has seen it; but as the pieces are good, she received twenty-seven thousand crowns for them, and has furnished her apartments anew, with wooden furniture, mirrors, and glass-plates, which amount to two thousand crowns of this holy poverty. The Rochefoucaulds were all the night in the garden during the fire, and the next day the Abbé de Marsillac and his sisters had a dreadful cough and hoarseness; their loss amounts to twenty thousand crowns. I have put together a thousand things without connection; I shall write better on Sunday, for I shall talk of you and all I learn from you; in the meantime, I shall often think of my dear child, and calculate that she loves me.

LETTER 960

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, the first day of the year, 1690.

I have not yet received the packet of Saturday the seventeenth, in answer to that of the seventh. I keep an exact account, and it is impossible to cheat me without doing me a great injury, and making me very unhappy; for it is the sequel of a conversation that is interrupted. I hope this letter will come to hand in time, it has often happened so: in the meanwhile, I have a great deal to say on the tragical and surprising story you tell me of poor Lausier. Your narrative has all the powers of rhetoric; it commands attention, raises curiosity, and leads to an event so melancholy, and so surprising, that I was quite affected at it, and gave a scream which alarmed my son. He came to see what was the matter, read this part of your letter, was affected in the same way, and cried out as I had done, and even louder; for he was well acquainted with this brave worthy man, and we could not help admiring the uncertainty of the hour and the manner of our death. All the circumstances of this event excite peculiar astonishment; the fresh dangers to which he was exposed in the last siege of Mayence, in which he engaged so romantically, his good fortune in escaping, his strength of constitution, the conversation in which he laughed at the Dean's, the rendezvous M. de Noailles had given him, and which he failed to attend by the interposition of the hand of God, which struck him in the street, and rendered aid unavailing, while in the arms of two brothers who loved him, and in the midst of their joy at seeing him again; all this is so affecting, and so remarkable, that though it is not the first sudden death we have heard of, it is attended with more extraordinary circumstances than perhaps ever before occurred, and would claim attention everywhere; but we have the same reasons that you have to be affected at it, and to fly from every object to this melancholy event. I am go-

ing to write to his poor brothers: such losses are very common to them; this is the third brother they have lost.

You have delightful weather through your winter; weather which must necessarily compel the Comte to go a hunting; must call you away from your patient, and dispose you more to walk than write to me; indeed you are right, such charming days should not be lost. Ours have been so deplorable, that we have not quitted the fireside, no one being able to venture abroad to witness the fog, notwithstanding the ice and frost; weather, in short, quite the reverse of yours, though my son has not been without six or seven neighbours, who have played, and made a great noise, in this room. But the weather improves, and the days begin to lengthen; they are milder sometimes in February and March than in May, by which we were once so much deceived at Livry. M. de Carcassonne has been with you; he had reason to be surprised at hearing that a man with whom he had just breakfasted, and who was in as good health as himself, should drop down dead. Maréchal de Villeroi, in a very different case, would not believe that M. de Genève [1] was a saint, and canonised, because he had dined twenty times with him at Lyons.

The interest of the eighteenth denier of Languedoc is not excessive; I thought the sixth denier wanted to be explained, it is quite unknown here. The want and scarcity of money is sensibly felt upon a thousand occasions; there are times when purchasers are to be met with immediately for such a commodity as you have to dispose of: now, if these purchasers are to be found, they cannot make good their payments. I hope you will find no such embarrassment: tell me when you have struck the bargain, and whether the Marquis is in good winter-quarters. I shall be very curious to know how he acquits himself at Paris and Versailles of all his duties, for he has a great many friends to see. Beaulieu is to tell me all he says and does, and what sort of an appearance he makes.

I comprehend all the unmeaning vague expressions

[1] St. Francis de Sales.

with which you honour the Abbess upon her taking leave. How glad I am that she did not take Pauline with her! I often think of this dear amiable girl with affection.

LETTER 961

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, January 4, 1690.

Your letter of the seventeenth at length found its way to me; it had taken a little trip to Rennes; it fills up the space which made me lose the thread of the conversation. I should also have lost the finest information in the world with regard to the *Court of Love*, and my new friend would have been quite distressed at it. His curiosity will be amply gratified; he had received a thousand other accounts, which were good for nothing. This Adhémar must have been a fine fellow, and very much beloved; his mistress must have been dreadfully shocked to see him expire whilst in the act of kissing her hand. I have some doubts, like you, whether she has resolved to take the veil: it is altogether a very pretty account; a little fragment of ancient gallantry, blended with poetry and wit, which I think worthy of curiosity. Your Adhémars and Castellanes are every where to be met with; and we find the name of Grignan more considerable in the time of Frederic I. than in that of Louis XIV. My son was much pleased with reading this account, and his wife still more so; I thank the Prior of St. Jean's [1] for it, and you also, my dear child.

There was a letter from the Marquis in the same packet, which highly delighted us; my son and his wife wanted to kiss and embrace him; they wished, particularly, that he might receive your permission to go to Paris; we cannot believe you will refuse him. His style is quite natural, juvenile, and artless; a few repetitions from a desire of pleasing; all his little reasons are ranged without exag-

[1] The Abbé Viani, Prior of the church of St. Jean at Aix.

geration, and placed simply in their proper place and light; what his friends say of his remaining at Kaysers-Lautern; his natural and just inclination to come and display a little the Colonel of eighteen; all of which is submitted in so affecting a manner to your will, that we could not restrain our tears, from affection and tenderness for this dear boy; and it appeared to us to be the most striking piece of eloquence we had ever met with. But what is better than all, is the assurance he gives us of always preferring glory to pleasure; that if there were the least thing to be done, he would not think of leaving the army; and we find that he speaks the truth. There is no drawback to make in what he says, there is so corruption yet in his heart; all his sentiments are genuine, all his expressions have their proper weight: we could not bestow sufficient praises upon this letter, which I shall carefully preserve for you, nor sufficiently esteem the writer. I conclude that he is now at Paris, where I have a great desire to know how he acquits himself, and a still greater, to be informed of his conduct at Versailles. It is there that his dear uncle would be useful to him; but it is not the will of God: never was there so cruel or so violent an attack of the gout; how unfortunate! Has he not reason to regret what he himself loses, and his family by him? What patience must he not be master of, to endure constant and scarcely bearable pain, which you can compare only to the torments of hell; but which is sufficient to ensure paradise, if considered as inflicted by Him who is the sovereign of all things, and to whom we should be entirely in submission!

But, my child, while we are upon a melancholy subject, I must tell you, that tears streamed from my eyes, when I pictured to myself the poor Dean [1], penetrated with grief, his heart overwhelmed and oppressed, saying mass for a brother then in the church, still quick as it were, and yet cold in his coffin, bleeding on every side.—Good heavens! what a thought!—Does the blood stream from a dead body? It must be so, since you say it. Behold then this

[1] The collegiate Dean of Grignan.

streaming blood which does not, alas! demand *justice,* but *mercy*; and the poor Dean, convinced of his religion, offering this great and pious sacrifice for a sinner, whose salvation is dear to him, and whose death is afflicting; and tremblingly asking mercy for him, who had not a single moment to implore it for himself. My child, this is an insupportable thought; nothing but distraction and dissipation can prevent its having the same effect upon everyone. The more faith the Dean possesses, the more he is to be pitied; but he would be still more to be pitied, if he had been above the fear of judgment. I recollect the mode of interment at the Feuillantines; all the pious nuns prostrated themselves three times, before they threw my poor cousin into the grave, and by groans and affecting prayers, entreated God to take pity on a wretched sinner; alas! what a sinner! Mademoiselle de Grignan was present: we thought we should dissolve in tears. But what folly to repeat so many useless things, in so doleful a strain! I ask you a thousand pardons.

I now return to you, my child. I thought the word *Molinists* underlined, would have made you understand the contrary; I was a little too cunning. The two male visitors were very good companions, we had no altercations, we agreed in everything, and had the pleasure of discussing and celebrating the greatest, the most important, and the most ancient truths of our religion. We constantly read *Abbadie*, and *l'Histoire Ecclésiastique*: the latter is the effect of the persuasions of the former; it is divine, and gives a new ardour to our faith.

It is a very fortunate thing for Pauline, not to have the defect of blushing! It has been, as you say, a real drawback upon your beauty, and upon mine when I was young; I found that, when not troubled with this ridiculous inconvenience, I would not change myself for another. This is a persecution inflicted by the devil upon vanity: in short, my child, it drove you from balls and Assemblies, though everyone constantly raised you to the rank of a beauty; but your imagination was so struck, that you could

not support it. Poor Pauline will not be very sensible of this advantage; I really think that people do not blush as they did formerly.

Beaulieu has waited on M. de La Trousse from me; he tells me, he took his time so well, that he was told to walk in; but that he heard him say at the door, "Do not let him come in; tell him, I thank Madame de Sévigné for her compliment," and was sent away. Beaulieu has been very severe upon him for this affront, as he is everywhere well received, and minutely questioned respecting me: he is highly offended, and very angry, saying it is the Order of the Holy Ghost that makes him so haughty; but that it was not necessary to send his mules and all his equipage into our stables to set fire to them, as at M. de La Rochefoucauld's. All he says upon this subject is quite natural and pleasant; and he has so cut and slashed M. de La Trousse, that I know not how he will get over it.

I always enclose you the Abbé de Bigorre's little notes; though the Marquise d'Uxelles, and many others, give you all possible information; but this, I trust, cannot displease you. You have insensibly led me to relate to my son your conversation with Alliot upon *soufre nerval*; he is very much affected at it, and will tell you his feelings; for my own part, I shall never forget this scene.

Monsieur DE SÉVIGNÉ *also writes to his Sister.*

(*Enclosed in his Mother's letter.*)

Surely, my little sister, some accident would happen to you, if you were often to talk of Kaysers-Lautern. I know not why my mother concealed from me your adventures with M. Alliot; nothing ever delighted me more. That expression, so seriously uttered by a woman who is eagerly consulting about her husband's health, constantly presents itself to me in a way I cannot describe to you; and I can compare it to nothing but the grave account my mother gave, at MADAME'S, of the ball where the Duke of Monmouth was present. Your sister-in-law, in attempting to speak the name of this specific, calls it *du soufre*

nerveux[1]; you must agree that this is better than all. How sorry I am that it can be of no use to the Chevalier de Grignan! how I pity him! I desire you, my beautiful little sister, to give him a hundred compliments, and embrace him and the graceful Pauline for me by proxy,—is not this allowable at two hundred leagues distance? Adieu, my little sister; my mother is perfectly well; we manage her in such a way, that you will have nothing to do but to imitate us, when she is with you. I send a thousand and a thousand sincere compliments to the wise, illustrious, and *happy* La Garde.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *continues and concludes her letter to her Daughter.*

And so do I, my very dear child. The sorrows and infirmities which overwhelm him, do not prevent me from thinking him *happy,* when I consider the use he makes of them. I conjure him to honour me still with his friendship. The diminution of his income arising from his estate, astonishes me; it is greater than ours, though ours is bad enough. Is yours fallen in like manner? pray tell me. Explain to me also how it is, that when M. de Grignan is with you, there should be eighty or a hundred in your solitude. You say that your affairs require another remedy besides being at Grignan; this I know as well as you. My health is good, think of your own. I should not be much astonished, if, for the last month, you awoke just before daybreak; at half past six, or seven: this would be as agreeable to me as to you; but to wake at four or five, is not what I call sleeping, but heating the blood. I believe, in fact, Boreas calls to you, "What business have you in my palace? why are you not at Paris, Versailles, or Aix?" It is cruel of him to fill your rooms with smoke. M. de Carcassonne appears to me to have as military a turn as Archbishop Turpin.

Poor Madame de La Fayette has not yet felt the

[1] Nervous sulphur.

sweets of her new little household; she has not yet got the better of the colic: Croisilles writes to me for her; her ill state of health renders her insensible to everything else. She is a very amiable worthy woman, whom you loved as soon as you were acquainted with her wit and understanding: the more we know her, the more we love her. How we have laughed, and been amused with her wise nonsense! do you recollect it? When she mentions you and old times, she places you at the head of everything that is sensible and agreeable; but she is too ill to exert her faculties.

Madame de Motteville is dead; will you not write to her brother? I know not how to blame M. d'Aix for what he says as an apology for not coming to Grignan, when he is at the very gate—"How unfortunate I am, and how much to be pitied!" Well, he is in the right; but if you can be satisfied with him, I advise you to be so—it is very unlucky to have always to complain of enemies at Court. Adieu, my dear child; I love you as your friendship deserves, and your person, which is truly to my taste.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *also writes at the same time to the Comte* DE GRIGNAN.

(Enclosed in her Letter to her Daughter.)

Good morrow, my dear Comte; so you are now at your Castle, which was in ancient times a place where Frederic granted enfeoffments. The first stone has long since been fixed, and the Archbishop intends to place the last. Are you not sorry to be absent from Aix and *Chimène*? No, for you saw her upon Mount Psyché. You are in such good company, that you forget the north wind, and its fury; but I conjure you to let the Marquis come and see you this Lent. My son constantly adores you, and his wife coquets with your portrait; she said to my daughter the other day, "I will say nothing affectionate to M. de Grignan, for I find I have so great a love for him that I hesitate." It is thus you stand in this little corner of the world.

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*LETTER 962

From M. DE CORBINELLI *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, January 6, 1690.

I wish you, Sir, as Happy a Year as you deserve to have; and I entreat you to believe, that the revolution of a thousand ages would find me still with the same feeling; I say as much to Madame de Coligny. I have read your reflections upon public affairs with pleasure. I wish the King could have seen your letter to me. I think Father Bouhours' work, *Pensées Ingénieuses*, excellent; but without your assistance it would not have been half so good. Madame de Sévigné will not return till next summer. I dined yesterday at M. de Lamoignon's, with Despréaux, Racine, and two famous Jesuits. Ancient and modern works were talked of; Pascal alone was opposed to Cicero, Seneca, and the divine Plato. The conversation would have been worthy of you. I opposed *Fra-Paolo* to them all, and I will not abate a tittle; many connoisseurs are of my opinion.

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*LETTER 963

From the Comte DE BUSSY, *M.* D'AUTUN, *and Mesdames* DE TOULONGEON *and* DE COLIGNY, *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Autun, January 6, 1690.

A party of your friends and relations, Madame, being assembled together to celebrate Twelfth-day, after having wished you were among them, proposed the pleasure of writing to you, as one of their amusements. They are persons who have some reputation for wit, and it is for this reason they wish to converse with you. The number of aggressors need not alarm you, Madame; you have

already seen, and you are again upon the point of seeing, that a single head, that thinks well, takes proper measures, and has no allies to thwart him, succeeds better than confederates. But, in plain language, you will have as little difficulty in answering us, as the King in beating the Emperor.

We are anxious to know if you think of returning to Paris. We know you went to Brittany with the Duchesse de Chaulnes, and that she went from thence to Rome to join her husband. Not one of us has believed that you wished to accompany her in the journey, knowing that

> Rarement, à courir le monde,
> On devient plus de bien [1].

Were you pleased at the increase of cash? It was only a subject of rejoicing to me, as it concerned my friends, whose purses were full the moment the edict was published. Will the beautiful Madelonne spend the winter in Paris? This is an article of consequence to you; and to us, Madame, on account of the interest we take in it. If you wish to know what sort of life we lead, we must tell you that the greater number of us are very merry, and that we are all so in some degree; but that we shall soon separate to think of our affairs. Not a day passes in which we do not meet to play at cards, and talk of the news. We sometimes enter upon subjects of morality and religion, but never theologically. New Year's gifts have occupied a portion of our time; for we have mutually given and received them; but the manner has been more than the matter.

The truth must be owned, Madame, this is passing life pleasantly; it appears short: we must, however, labour after something more substantial than amusement. On this we are all resolved; but some take things to heart more than others. There are certain persons among us who will pardon themselves nothing, and you may guess who they

[1] By running about the world, we rarely grow the richer.
[Translation.]

are [1]. There are others more indulgent; but though they differ upon the means of salvation, they all agree in the respect and regard they entertain for you.

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*LETTER 964

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to M.* DE COULANGES, *who was in Rome.*

The Rocks, January 8, 1690.

What a melancholy date, my amiable cousin, compared with yours! it suits a recluse, like me; and that of Rome suits one whose fate is to wander uncontrolled, and "who stalks his idleness from one end of the world to the other." What a happy life! and how mildly has Fortune treated you, as you say, notwithstanding her quarrel with you! Always beloved, always esteemed, always carrying joy and pleasure along with you, always the favourite of, and fascinated with, some friend of consequence, a Duc, a Prince, or a Pope, for I will add the Holy Father by way of novelty; always in good health, never at the charge of anyone, no business, no ambition; but, above all, the advantage of not growing old! this is the height of felicity. You doubt sometimes whether you are not advancing, by certain calculations of time and years; but old age is still at a distance: you do not approach it with horror, as some persons I could name; this is reserved for your neighbour, and you have not even the fears that are usually felt at

[1] This refers to Madame de Coligny. The strange suit she defended is alluded to in Letter 696, of 1st of March, 1684, which will be found in the fifth volume. But when Bussy says she pardons herself nothing, there is every appearance that he speaks only of the fault she had committed in marrying without his consent, and not of what ought to have been the object of her perpetual remorse, the unworthy obstinacy in which she persisted, of robbing her unfortunate child of his rights, and causing him to be declared illegitimate by the sentence of the Court. This was nothing to Bussy, in comparison with a degrading alliance. He would willingly have said, as Mademoiselle Dutillet did to Madame de Termes, a Chabot by birth, who married a President for her second husband, and who assigned her being with child by him as a reason for this step: "Six bastards would have disgraced you less, than a legitimate child by such a marriage."

seeing a fire in your neighbourhood. In short, after mature reflection, I pronounce you the happiest man in the world. This last journey to Rome is, in my opinion, the most delightful adventure that could have happened to you, with an adorable Ambassador (the Duc de Chaulnes) on a noble and grand occasion; and a visit to the beautiful mistress of the world, whom, having once seen, we are always longing to see again. I very much like the verses you have made on her; she cannot be too highly celebrated. I am sure my daughter will approve them; they are well written, and poetical: we sing them. I am delighted with what you tell me of Pauline, whom you saw at Grignan on your way; I have judged most favourably of her from your praises, and the unaffected letter you wrote to Madame de Chaulnes, which she has sent to me. Oh, how much I should like to take a journey to Rome, as you propose! but then it must be with the face and air I had many years ago, and not with those I now have. A woman, particularly, should not move her old bones, except to be Ambassadress. I believe that Madame de Coulanges, though still young, is of the same opinion; but in my youth, I should have been in raptures at such an adventure: it is not the same with you; everything becomes you: enjoy, then, your privilege, and the jealousy you excite, to know who shall be favoured with you. I will not waste my time in arguing with you on the present state of affairs; all the Duc's prosperities have given me real joy: you fear precisely what all his friends apprehend, that, being the only one who can fill the place he holds with equal success and reputation, he will be kept in it too long. This apartment in your new palace creates new alarms; but let us do better, let us not anticipate evils: rather let us hope that everything will happen as we wish, and that we shall all meet again at Paris. I was delighted with your remembrance, your letter, and your songs; write to me whenever it is agreeable and convenient: I take the liberty of sending this by the Ambassadress; and I do more, my dear cousin, for under her protection I take the liberty of embracing

my dear Governor of Brittany, and His Excellency the Ambassador, with real affection, and without offence to respect: these high dignities do not intimidate me. I am sure he still loves me; God bless him, and bring him back again; these are my wishes for the New Year. Adieu, my dear cousin, I embrace you; continue to love me, I wish it, it is my whim, and to love you more than you love me: but you are very amiable, and I must not place myself on a par with you.

LETTER 965

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, January 8, 1690.

It is in your hands, my dear love, that my letters turn to gold; when they leave mine, I think them so heavy and so loaded with words, that I say, "My daughter will not have time to read all this"; but you flatter me too much, for I do not, in conscience, think I ought to believe all you say. In short, take care; such praises and commendations are dangerous; I will not at least conceal from you, that I prefer them to those of all the rest of the world. But let us be reconciled, for we seem to be somewhat at variance: I said you read *Les Petites Lettres* superficially, but I repent; for they are too beautiful, and too worthy of you, not to have engaged all your attention. You also affront me, by supposing I have not read *Les Imaginaires* [1]; it was I who lent them to you; how charming and true they are! I have read them more than once; so that upon these mutual offences we may embrace; I see nothing that can prevent us from loving one another: is not this the advice of the Chevalier, as he is our confidant? I am, indeed delighted at the amendment in his health: this sen-

[1] These *Letters,* attributed to Nicole, appeared in 1664. They gave Racine an opportunity to write two of them, which are still read with pleasure, and which show the extent of his understanding. It was thus, after having attacked the Jansenists, he became himself a very zealous Jansenist.

timent is much stronger than my words. But to return to reading; it is our principal occupation; my son has a very accommodating quality, that is, he is very willing to read twice, or three times over, what he likes, and what suits his taste; by this means, he enters more deeply into its merits, learns it by heart, and as it were incorporates himself with it, and fancies he wrote it himself. He reads *Abbadie* with transport, admiring, all the while, the genius which could produce so fine a piece [1]: when we find an argument well conducted, well concluded, perfectly just, we think we rob you of it in reading it without you; "How this passage would charm my *sister*! would charm my *daughter*!" Thus we blend your remembrance in everything that is superior, and this heightens its value. I pity you for not being fond of history; the Chevalier is so, and it is a fine asylum against dullness; some histories are so grand, that we are very willing to go back a few ages: the diversity enlarges and improves the mind; it is this abridgement of subjects that obliges you to read Father Coton's *Orations,* and soon exhausts all your books. I wish you had not given your son a distaste for history; a knowledge of it is very necessary for a young man of his profession. He has written to me from Kaysers-Lautern; good God, what a name! He does not yet seem certain of coming to Paris; he says a thousand pretty things to me, very well turned; he thanks me for the news I sent him, and tells me all the little misfortunes attending his retinue. I dote on this little Colonel.

Our Abbé Bigorre earnestly entreats me to give credit to no one but to him, concerning the news from Rome. It is an insult to say that the Holy Father is a Spaniard, and that the Ambassador is the dupe [2]; we shall see this, for it

[1] His book upon *The Truth of the Christian Religion.*

[2] The following anecdote sufficiently authorised these suspicions: Alexander VIII. being then only the Signor Ottoboni, and having a great desire to be a Cardinal, without it costing him anything, had a garden near which the Donna Olympia often walked. At the Court of this lady he had a friend, through whose means he engaged her to come and breakfast in his garden. He prepared for her a very elegant re-

cannot be concealed, *this spread eagle* will show us on which side it wings its way. For my part I should be patient, if Avignon could return to you; what a happiness it would be, to marry Pauline with this brilliant name! I long to ask you how M. de La Trousse is; Beaulieu, you know, could not inform me.

In return, I must tell you that Corbinelli is more mystical than ever; he is far beyond St. Thérèse; he has discovered that my grandmother [1], in the height of her soul, was quite distilled in prayer; he has bought a book of Malaval's for me, of which neither my son nor I understand a word. In short, he is still the same man he has always been; he no longer writes to me; this taste has subsided; I hear of him, and as I have writing enough, we have agreed upon this silence, without prejudice to our prescribed friendship; that, you know, cannot be disowned.

As to delicate constitutions, they deserve to be confided in; I must own to you that after the situation in which I have seen Mademoiselle de Méri, I begin to think her immortal; and considering the prudence of Madame de La Fayette, and the attention she pays to her health, I am of opinion that she will get the better of all her complaints. God grant she may; she is an excellent friend, and worthy of our love and esteem. But now to my health; this should make you tremble: God has continued it to me so perfect, that I am surprised, and it would alarm me if I were as attentive to myself as you are to me. I was yesterday in

past, and a sideboard on which were her arms. She immediately perceived it, and considered the sideboard as her own; for it was the fashion to send her flowers or fruit in gilded vases, which were considered as presents also. On leaving Ottoboni's, the mutual friend said to the prelate, that Olympia understood his gallant intention, and was delighted at it. Ottoboni took his friend into his sanctum, and showed him a beautiful pearl necklace, saying, "This will go with the sideboard." A fortnight after a promotion took place, in which Ottoboni was included; and he immediately sent the pearl necklace to the jeweller, and erased the arms of Olympia from his plate.

The Signora Olympia Maldachini was sister-in-law of Pope Innocent X. (Pamphili); she had great influence over him. France was scarcely less duped than she, and the Pope Ottoboni was as ungrateful as Ottoboni the Cardinal.

[1] Jeanne-Françoise Frémiot, Baroness de Chantal.

our charming walks, and the weather was as fine as in September: I do not let these fine days escape me: when the weather changes, I keep my room; in this respect, I am no longer the same: I formerly made a foolish vow to go out every day. I already dread the departure of the Chevalier, and M. de La Garde. Explain to me a little more fully how it happened that the pension of the latter was stopped: have they ceased to pay it, without assigning a reason? must a poor man accustomed to this comfort, be left to starve, without being told a syllable? It grieves me, but there are some things which require explanation. Our good berbisi [1] writes me wonders of you and your grandeur: a President and two Counsellors of the Parliament of Dijon have been in Provence; they were disappointed at not meeting you, but they sounded your praise to our good President, who is entirely devoted to you. My daughter-in-law is gone to Rennes for a few days upon a relation's taking the veil; she was sorry to go; she has taken her trinkets to the mint, like the rest. Your brother desires to be kindly remembered to you. I have just been writing to Coulanges; he is quite fascinated with the Prince de Turenne; do not be displeased, Chevalier; it is to degrade this name, that I do not say M. de Turenne [2].

LETTER 966

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, January 11, 1690.

Good heavens! what a New Year's gift! what wishes! what could be more calculated to charm me? I will tell you a feeling I have just discovered in myself; if it could

[1] President *à mortier* to the Parliament of Dijon. Madame de Sévigné's great-grandmother was a Berbisi, and mother of Jeanne-Françoise Frémiot, Baroness de Chantal.

[2] It is well known that Louis XIV. had given the title of Prince to the Vicomte de Turenne. The nobility were offended at this preference. They were still more so, when, after that time, he affected to refuse the title of Maréchal of France, and to take only that of Prince: thus can nobiliary pride (l'orgueil nobiliaire) degrade the noblest minds.

repay yours, I should be satisfied, for I have no other coin: instead of the kind fears which the frequent deaths that surround you occasion, and which make you think of others, I offer you the real consolation, and even the joy which frequently arise to me from my being older than you. The thought that the oldest goes first, and that I shall probably and naturally keep my rank with my dear child, constitutes the true charms of this feeling. What have I not suffered, when your ill state of health made me dread a reverse of the order of nature? These were trying times; let us talk no more of them; you are well, God be praised; and everything has resumed its natural course. *God preserve you*; I believe you hear my tone of voice, and know me.

I now come to the Chevalier; I have no hesitation in believing that the climate of Provence would agree with him better in winter than that of Paris. All those who, like swallows, fly to your sunshine, afford sufficient testimony of this. But, while I rejoice at his being sensible of the difference, I am grieved at his having lost a thousand crowns of his income; and by what means? was his regiment worth so much to him? He will sell it then to the Marquis [1]; but will not the money arising from it, in payment of debts, diminish the interest of loans? Settle this account for me, which makes me uneasy; I cannot figure to myself the Chevalier de Grignan at Paris, without his genteel and neat little equipage; I cannot see him walking on foot, nor inquiring for positions to Versailles; such an idea cannot enter my head; this article is interlocutory; ah, how happily this term of chicanery finds admittance here! Nor do I comprehend your sixty-four people, besides guards; you deceive me, this cannot be your meaning; you must give me a mathematical demonstration.

With regard to Pauline, you cannot surely hesitate respecting the choice you have to take, between good and

[1] The Chevalier de Grignan, attaining the rank of Field-Maréchal in 1688, and had leave to keep his regiment, that he might afterwards resign in favour of the young Marquis de Grignan, his nephew.

evil. The superiority of your understanding will easily point out to you the true road: everything leads you to your duty; honour, conscience, and the power you possess. When I consider how much she has corrected herself in a short time to please you, and how much she is improved, you will be answerable for all the good she neglects. As to reading, you are too much engaged in conversation and discussion to attend to it: we are more quiet here, and therefore have leisure for it. I even read works I had slightly run over at Paris, and which appear quite new to me. We also read, by way of interlude to our great readings, scraps that we meet with, such as the fine Funeral Orations of M. de Bossuet [1], M. Fléchier [2], M. Mascaron [3], Father Bourdaloue: we pay a fresh tribute of tears to M. de Turenne, Madame de Montausier, the Prince, the late MADAME, and the Queen of England; we admire the *Portrait of Cromwell*: these are master-pieces of eloquence, which charm the mind. You must not say, "These are old;" they are not old, they are divine. Pauline should be made acquainted and delighted with them; but this is calculated solely for *The Rocks.* I know not what book to recommend to Pauline: D'Avila is fine in Italian, we have read it; Guichardin is very long; I should like the *Anecdotes of Medicis*, which are an abridgement, but they are not in Italian. I will not name Bentivoglio again [4]; let her confine herself to poetry, I do not like Italian prose; to Tasso, Aminto, *Il Pastor Fido,* etc. I dare not add Ariosto, there are some bad passages in it; let her also read history; let her cherish this taste, which may long preserve her from idleness: it is to be feared that if this part of reading were suppressed, there would be scarcely anything to read; let her begin with the *Life of Theodosius the Great,* and let her tell me how she likes it. This, my child, is a letter of trifles; we set apart some days for chatting, without of-

[1] The Bishop of Meaux.

[2] The Bishop of Nîmes.

[3] The Bishop of Agen.

[4] Gui Bentivoglio, Cardinal, and author of *The Civil Wars in Flanders,* and several other works.

fence to serious matters, in which we always take true interest. Adieu, my beloved child: we wish you every happiness this year, and many more.

LETTER 967

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, January 15, 1690.

You are right, I cannot reconcile myself to the date of this year; it has, however, been already begun for some time; and you will find, that, let us pass it as we may, we shall soon find the bottom of the bag that contained the thousand livres [1].

You really spoil me, and so do my Paris friends; the sun has scarcely gained upon us a barley-corn, before you tell me, when you shall expect me at Grignan; and my friends desire me to fix from that hour the time of my departure, in order to hasten their joy. Such pressing civilities flatter me highly, and particularly yours, which admit of no comparison. I will, then, sincerely confide to my dear Comtesse, that between this and September, I cannot entertain a thought of leaving this country; this is the time when I send my little means to Paris, of which only a very small part is gone. This is the time when the Abbé Charrier is treating for my fines and sales, which amount to ten thousand livres; but more of this hereafter; let us content yourselves with driving away every hope of taking the least step before the time I have mentioned. I will not, however, say that you are my goal, my perspective; you know it well, and that you are so firmly rooted in my heart, that I fear M. Nicole would find much difficulty to prune you away; this, in short, is my disposition. You use the most affectionate expression possible to me, in hoping you may never see the end of the happy years you

[1] Madame de Sévigné compared the twelve months of the year to a bag with a thousand livres, which is exhausted almost as soon as it is opened.

wish me. We are very far from agreeing in our wishes; for I have informed you of a very just and very proper truth, which God will, doubtless, grant, and which is to follow the natural order of Providence; this is my comfort through the thorny road of old age: mine is a rational feeling, and yours too extraordinary and too kind a one.

I shall pity you when M. de La Garde and the Chevalier are no longer with you; they are excellent companions; but they have their reasons, and that of bringing to life the pension of a man who is not dead appears to me very important. You will have your child with you, who will suit his station at Grignan very prettily; he must, for various reasons, meet a kind reception there, and you will, no doubt, heartily embrace him. He has written me another charming letter to wish me a happy New Year; he appears very forlorn at Kaysers-Lautern: he says, nothing prevents his coming to Paris, but waiting for orders from Provence: that this is the main spring which sets him in motion. You seem to make him wait a long while; his letter is dated the second instant, and I supposed him at Paris; let him go there, and after having made his appearance, let him fly to embrace you. This little man seems to me qualified for a good match, and if you should find one for him, you may easily obtain His Majesty's permission for the reversion of your noble post in his favour. You find that his disposition and Pauline's are very dissimilar; they must necessarily, however, both be possessed of certain qualities of the heart; temper is another consideration. I am delighted that the Marquis's sentiments please you; I could wish him a greater taste for the sciences, and reading, but this may come in time. As to Pauline, that devourer of books, I had rather she should swallow bad ones, than have no love for reading; romances, plays, Voiture, Sarrasin, have all been exhausted; has she dipped into Lucian? is she capable of enjoying *Les Petites Lettres*? History should come next, and if she does not find her account in this, I pity her. If she does not like the finest works of devotion, so much the worse for her, for we

know but too well, that even without devotion ourselves, they are charming. With respect to ethics, as she would not make so good a use of it as you, I would not have her meddle either with Montaigne, Charron, or any others of his stamp; she is too young. The true morality of this age, is what we learn in conversation, fables, history, and example. If you were to bestow a little of your time upon her in conversation, she would reap greater benefit from this, than from all the rest. I know not whether what I say is worth your reading, I am very far from being wedded to my opinion.

You ask me if I am still a little devotee, of little worth; indeed I am, and to my regret am nothing more. All my goodness consists in knowing my religion, and its signification: I cannot be imposed upon by false for true religion; I separate the shadow from the substance: I hope I am not mistaken in this, and that God, having already endowed me with good sentiments, will continue them to me; past favours, in some measure, guarantee me for those to come; so that I live in confidence, blended, however, with some fear. But I must scold you for saying our Corbinelli *is the devil's mystic*; your brother is bursting with laughter, and I scold him as well as you. How! *the devil's mystic*! a man who thinks of nothing but destroying the empire of the devil; who constantly attaches himself to his foes, the saints of the church; a man who sets no value upon his body, who endures poverty with a *Christian*, or what you would call *Philosophic,* resignation; who never omits celebrating the perfections and existence of God; who never judges his neighbour, but always excuses him; who passes his life in the exercise of charity and usefulness, insensible to pleasure and the enjoyments of life; who, in short, notwithstanding his ill fortune, is wholly resigned to the will of God! and this you call being *the devil's mystic*! You must own, that this is not the portrait of our poor friend; the expression, nevertheless, carries with it an air of pleasantry, which at first excites a laugh, and may surprise the ignorant. But I resist, as you see, and sup-

port the faithful admirer of Saint Thérèse, of my grandmother (*Sainte Chantal*), and the fortunate Jean-de-la Croix [1]. Now I mention Corbinelli, he wrote me a very pretty note the other day, giving me an account of a conversation and a dinner at M. de Lamoignon's; those present were the host, M. de Troyes, M. de Toulon, Father Bourdaloue, his companion, Despréaux, and Corbinelli. The subject was, the works of the Ancients and Moderns; Despréaux was an advocate for the ancients, with one single exception in favour of a modern; who, in his opinion, surpassed both the old and the new. Bourdaloue's friend, who presumed a great deal, and had joined Despréaux and Corbinelli, asked him what writer it was who held so distinguished a rank in his judgment? Despréaux would not say. Corbinelli joined with the Jesuit, and earnestly entreated Despréaux to name his author, that he might read him night and day. Despréaux answered smiling: "Ah, Sir, you have read him more than once, I am sure." The Jesuit resumed with a disdainful air, *un cotal riso amaro* (a bitter smile), and pressed Despréaux still more closely to name this wonderful author. Despréaux said, "Father, do not press me." The Father persisted. At length, Despréaux took him by the arm, and squeezing him very hard, said to him, "Well, Father, since you will know, it is Pascal." "Pascal!" said the Father, reddening with astonishment, "Pascal is clever as far as falsehood can be so." "Falsehood!" resumed Despréaux, "falsehood! know that his work is as true as it is inimitable; it has lately been translated into three different languages." The Father replied, "This does not make him a man of more veracity." Despréaux was heated, and exclaimed like a madman, "What, Father! will you say, of one of your brethren having published in one of his books, that *a Christian is not obliged to love God* [2]? dare you say this is false?" "Sir,"

[1] A Spanish Prince, the intimate friend of St. Thérèse, so sublime a theologian and spiritualist, that it was considered extreme vanity in his translator to have pretended to understand him.

[2] This is one of the famous disputes which Despréaux is said to have supported in more places than one, upon the subject of the love of

said the Father, in a rage, "you should discriminate." "Discriminate!" said Despréaux, "discriminate! zounds, discriminate! discriminate whether we are obliged to love God or not!" and taking Corbinelli by the arm, flew to the other end of the apartment; then returned, and walked to and fro like a man distracted, but without approaching the holy Father, and at length joined the company in the dining-room: here the scene ends, and the curtain drops. Corbinelli has promised me the remainder when we meet; but being convinced that you will find this scene as humorous as I did, I send it you, and if you read it in a good humour, I am sure you will be pleased.

I am informed that several Duchesses and great ladies have been enraged, that, though at Versailles, they were not at the supper on Twelfth-night; these are what are called miseries. You know the other news, better than I do. I have sent Bigorre's note to Guébriac, who returns you a thousand thanks; he is satisfied with your *Court of Love.* I consider Pauline very clever in being able to play at chess; I am afraid she would hold me in contempt, if she knew how much this game is beyond my capacity.

Monsieur DE SÉVIGNÉ *also writes to his Sister.*

(Enclosed in his Mother's letter.)

I am very much of your opinion, my little sister, respecting the *devil's mystic*; I was struck with the expression; I had turned the idea on every side, and could say nothing to please myself upon it. I thank you for having taught me to explain, in so few words and with so much propriety, what had so long been revolving in my mind. But what I admire the most in this *mystic* is, that his tranquillity in this state is the effect of his devotion; he would have some scruples to emerge from it, because he is of the order of Providence, and it would be impious in a simple mortal, to pretend to act in opposition to its dictates; we

God, and was, perhaps, the first that gave rise to his idea of the epistle to the Abbé Renaudot, which he did not write till 1695. See Ep. XII. of Despréaux, and the 10th of the *Provincial Letters.*

may therefore conclude that he will never go to mass, as the delicacy of his conscience would be hurt thereby. As you have, at length, allowed Pauline to read the *Metamorphoses,* I advise you to be no longer uneasy respecting the books that may be put into her hands. Has she not a taste for all pretty histories? there are a thousand little works that amuse and adorn the mind. Would she not find pleasure in reading many passages of the *Roman History*? has she read *The History of the Triumvirate*? are the Constantines and Theodosiuses exhausted? How I should fear for her active and lively mind, if you did not exercise it! As she has the vulgarity, like her uncle, not to bite at the subtleties of metaphysics, I pity her, but do not think I blame or despise her: I have reasons not to do so. My beloved little sister, adieu.

LETTER 968

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, January 18, 1690.

You have too many apprehensions for a state of health, which was never so perfect before; but this is the real cause of your alarm, and makes you find more security in the delicacy of others. My poor child, we are all mortal; but I admired, the other day, with what truth you told me that it was never for yourself that you feared death, to which we are all sentenced; that this never entered your thoughts: this is so extraordinary, that, after having admired you, I dread your indifference with regard to yourself, and conjure you to think of your preservation, in favour of those who are advanced so far before you, that you can never reach them: my idea is more just and natural than yours.

Is it possible that you can find no purchasers for your corps? This will very much embarrass you and the Chevalier, and is a great proof of the extreme poverty of the times. M. de Pomponne wrote to me like a good friend,

at the beginning of the year; he told me he had not the least doubt that I should pass the winter here, as I could never have more substantial reasons for my stay. Everything however has its limits, and I should be glad to see the care you bestow on your *coqs d'Inde* [1]; it is a great pity to be so good, and yet absent, and this from necessity: let us then own, that this is a very disagreeable period. I am very desirous that you should have your son with you, he has languished too long in that tormenting place that is so difficult to write [2]; let him go straight to you, and he can return with the Chevalier. When I observed the latter, disposing of himself for the winter, as if he were a different man; chalking out the time, and taking the necessary measures for his departure; I wondered at his having forgotten how winter acts upon him, and supposed it would not be long before he discovered he had reckoned without consulting the gout; he excites in me more compassion, than I am willing to tell him. I can easily conceive that the duties of the mistress of the house may sometimes divert you from the office of nurse; but duties must be fulfilled on all sides, and you are never deficient here. I think you are very happy in having M. de La Garde. You say many things to him, that you could tell to no other person; this is a great consolation. I conjure him to believe that it was only the errors in which you left him, that made me complain unjustly; I have long loved and revered his merit. I wish you had by accident preserved the letters I wrote to you, respecting the deputation, in which I apostrophised M. de Grignan for assistance; I should desire you to show him this enthusiasm. I spoke truly however, and I wonder at your idea, that, if you were King, you would deprive the Governor of Brittany of this nomination. Yet you find that no King, from the time of Charles the Eighth, ever thought of doing so; and, except when an enemy is desirous of distinguishing himself by

[1] Turkeys.

[2] Kaysers-Lautern. A town in the Lower Palatinate, taken by the French in 1688.

such an insult, no one ever thinks of coming to ask the King the name of the person whom all Brittany, in full Assembly, appoints to pay their homage to the King. Is it not natural for a Governor in his Province to choose his Deputies? does not the Governor of Languedoc and of other places do the same? and why, then, should this distinction exist with regard to Brittany, which has always been free, whose prerogatives have been always preserved, and which is as considerable by its extent as its situation? In short, did not our great heiress [1] deserve to have her marriage-contract faithfully executed? For my part, I can perceive no harm that this proceeding could do to the King's service, being similar to the rule observed in all other Provinces; if I were in His Majesty's place, I should prefer the ancient custom to be kept up, and that the Governor of Brittany should choose a native of the Province, to come and pay the compliments of the Province. But M. de Grignan, and you, my child, have deserted me; this, indeed, I should never have suspected from you, who are so situated as to feel these alterations; I thought you would follow the example of M. de La Rochefoucauld, etc. But my suit is trampled on, it is not examined, I am tried without mercy, and am deprived of my principal judge; I am going to write *false* upon the *arrêt* of the Parliament of Toulouse, as Buri said; I will avenge myself instantly; this is the fact. There is a person who has certainly a great share of wit, but it is so delicate and so easily disgusted, that she can only read five or six sublime and exquisite works of distinguished reputation. She cannot endure history; a great misfortune, for it affords pleasure to all the world: she has another misfortune, she cannot read twice the very books which she prefers to all others. This person says she is insulted, when she is told she is not fond of reading; this is another cause to try. But speaking of books, my dear Pauline, I have found what will do for

[1] Anne, Duchesse of Brittany, daughter and heiress of Duc Francis II. and Marguerite de Foix, married Charles VIII., King of France, as her first husband, and Louis XII., successor of Charles VIII., as her second.

you: it is the *Life of Pope Sixtus the Fifth,* in Italian; I have read it with pleasure; it has just occurred to me. Is is not true, my child, that this book will amuse her? Good heavens! how handsome and entertaining I think this little girl! how I long to see her!

For a fortnight past we have had hurricanes that have dismayed us; I have not been able to walk; and on the day I saw the sun perish in that thick cloud, after having shone all the day, could I do better in your service than fly as I did? You are a thankless girl, if you do not preserve your health, out of gratitude. I enclose you a letter of thanks from my good Abbé Charrier; had he written to you as he writes to me, you would have liked the natural simplicity of his style; but your sublime wit has embarrassed him in a *sun* and an *atom*: do not fail to answer him; pay him for me, and assure him that your *sun* will always be very attentive to his *atom*; that you shall always see in him the son of his father, and a man to whom your mother has many obligations.

Your brother sees only such parts of your letters as I am willing to show him; I need only say there is nothing here that will amuse him, and he inquires no farther. His wife it still at Rennes, where she is detained a prisoner on account of the floods: she is quite vexed at it. We do not compare our sun with yours: we know what degree we are in, and that your days are neither so long, nor so short, as ours. Adieu, my dear love; it seems to me that you must feel how much I love you, and that I need not tell you: it is not however always possible to suppress it.

LETTER 969

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, January 22, 1690.

Good heavens, what a situation you are in! how pressing a one! and how much and sensibly I am grieved at it!

But, my child, how weak and futile are wishes upon such occasions! and how needless it is to tell you, that if I had now, as I have had, some portable sum which depended on me, it should soon be yours! I am overwhelmed with a host of little creditors who dun and threaten me, and I do not know whether I shall be able to satisfy them, as I had hoped to do; for I am quite suffocated by the obligation I am under of paying immediately five thousand livres by way of fine, and also the price of the estate of Madame d'Acigné, which I have purchased, to avoid paying ten thousand if I had waited two years longer. Such, then, is my situation; but this is only to acquaint you with the utter impossibility of my assisting you. Your brother appears to me to feel for you, and I am persuaded he would perform his duty better than your rich prelates, if the times were as they have been, that is, if it were possible to borrow. He will talk to you himself, and tell you his opinion of your affairs. I have also set forth to him the embarrassments of your little Colonel; he mentioned the subject to me the first, some time ago, pitying and regretting, like us, that the Chevalier had not the management of him for the first year or two; nothing could have been of so much service to him as such a master; in short, my dearest child, no one but God can confine so great a number of disagreeable things within the bounds of resignation, in which you appear to me. To return to my son; he had some anxiety on seeing a stripling of seventeen or eighteen at the head of such a troop. He remembers enough of past times, to know how difficult it is at that age to command old officers; and this difficulty would have been removed, if he could have had his uncle to establish him: this is a very disagreeable and delicate time for him. Cannot you assist him with some prudent counsellor, to advise him a little? For, in short, he is alone, and cannot at his age know a profession that requires more experience than any other. I have conjured you to send for the Marquis to Grignan; what will he do during the carnival at Paris and Versailles? do you think he will acquit himself well of the

duty and compliments he has to go through? I perhaps do him wrong; but he is very young, and little accustomed to this business: in short, I think he has more to perform than he is equal to. I resign the pen to my son, I will resume it again presently.

Monsieur DE SÉVIGNÉ *also writes to his Sister.*

(*Enclosed in his Mother's letter.*)

The maternal uncle now writes to you himself, my dear little sister, and assures you with the greatest sincerity, that were he possessed of the fortune that is his due, that is, if land were money, and not a mere song, an illusion, etc., you would see by some very strong proofs, how much I interest myself in what regards you; but, alas! my beautiful dear, I am surrounded only by people whom I may imprison, who entreat me to do it every day, who live in places belonging to me, who pray for me, as they say, and, at the same time, assure me, that as to money, I must not think of it: such is my situation. If, however, by some not impossible event, I should be reimbursed a certain sum that I am promised, you may be assured that I will apply it in such a way as to rouse the paternal uncles, who, in the midst of forty and fifty thousand livres a year, see you groan, without doing anything but praying for you, as my farmers pray for me. Good heavens! why do they not neglect their buildings a little, which they will quit sooner than they suppose, and why do they not think of supporting the only prop of their house for the future? Were I to dwell longer upon this subject, I should be in a rage; I will therefore discontinue it, to tell you that I think your son very young, very inexperienced, very little calculated to support so great a burden as that with which he is laden —a regiment of twelve companies, at the age of eighteen! If he is mild, they will use him just as they please: if he is severe and haughty, let him beware of finding fault without reason; for, to exert authority, and to be in the wrong, subjects a man to great humiliation. If he is obliged to

act with rigour, it must be at the utmost extremity; if he avoids this extremity, the consequences are dangerous, particularly with respect to the old soldiers. In short, I pity him: he is promoted too early in life, and this advancement is his misfortune; it would have been better, either that the Chevalier had kept his regiment for some time, or that Providence had ordained that he were capable of serving, and consequently of attending to the conduct of this dear boy; all these monsters, these dragons, would then have disappeared, and roses and lilies would have sprung up in their place. I sincerely wish, my dear sister, that some joyful event may speedily happen to you, and that I may partake it with you, as I partake of your anxiety at this moment. I will not, I can assure you, lose any opportunity of diminishing it, if it be possible; and in this I will employ more zeal, than others do indifference and perhaps repugnance.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *continues and concludes her letter to her Daughter.*

I think what my son says is perfectly true. This place, which was the cause of our joy, occasions you great embarrassments to support it; but consider, my dearest child, for there are times when nothing must be left undone, that Bourbilly[1] is yours; this is a little spot that should have been kept for a rainy day; but you cannot be more distressed than you are at present. Have you properly disposed the good President of Berbisi[2]? Write to him, perhaps he may find means to procure you some money upon this mortgage: my signature shall not be wanting. This is all I can say to you, and the only thing I can do for you. It is in vain to talk to me of your health; it is impossible that you can sleep with so many dragons, without your blood being heated, and making cruel depredations. I am quite uneasy about you; and I also pity the

[1] The estate in Burgundy, which belonged to Madame de Sévigné.

[2] President *à mortier* of the Parliament of Dijon, and a near relation of Madame de Sévigné's.

Chevalier: what a situation, and what an over-all is this rheumatism! M. de Grignan appears to me in perfect health. It is true, I thought M. de La Garde employed with his workmen; how could I guess at his situation? unless it had been told me, it was impossible. It is however to this circumstance that you owe the sweets and consolation of your society—though you are melancholy, it is some comfort to be so together. I wish you could know how much I feel your vexations though at the distance of two hundred leagues from you. But how ridiculously one writes at such a distance! I often relate ridiculous things, for the sake of chatting with you; and forget that you are overwhelmed with a thousand subjects of uneasiness: I am really ashamed of myself. Madame de La Fayette mentions you and the Chevalier to me in all her notes; she is far from well; she desires me to tell you all her grievances, and that she could not help being delighted at your son's having a regiment. Her little daughter-in-law was highly approved at Versailles, even by His Majesty; she has given up everything; she feels the charms and relief of this new family.

If you had seen the answer of M. d'Aix, you would have thought it very serious, and written in a style which does not at all resemble his, nor the letter I wrote him. The destiny of the man who would obstinately die at the foot of a tree, is frightful indeed; this was despair; he was stopped there as if by compact. Your account did not make me cry out; it astonished and affected me in a manner suitable to the subject. It is cruel of you to recollect Monfermeil; this is, without contradiction, the most ridiculous period of my life; have you no other in your imagination? Drive that away, I beseech you; it was a lot thrown upon me. Adieu, my best and dearest child; I am quite unhappy about you; and how can I be otherwise? Two years to elapse, without receiving your salary, and besides all that you had to support, your arrears, and Paris, and, in short, everything! This grand edifice was more in need of support, than it was necessary to build new ones. In-

form me when you find a purchaser for your corps. You say you hear no news. Does not the Marquise d'Uxelles constantly write to M. de La Garde?

LETTER 970

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, January 25, 1690.

How I pity you, my dear child, for being obliged to read such dull letters! but I should pity you much more, if you preserved them; it would be curious if you were to do as you did at Sainte-Marie. I knew that M. de Sévigné's horses had run away; this tells us, that we should hold young people with a tight rein: sister Pauline, this is for you. I was told that the sun set in a tremendous cloud on the twenty-fourth of December, strange circumstance! and that the fog was very thick; this informs us, sisters, that we should not walk at this season. This is all I can remember of the fine lecture, and all the moral that can be derived from it.

Your taste is blinded; mine is a better criterion by which to judge, when I say I like your style: without flattery, it may be said to be perfect, and that no one can write better; I am certain of what I advance, but I say no more on account of your menaces. You have thrown your verses at my head very opportunely, to amuse me, and divert me from attending to the shortness of your letter. I think them very pretty and gallant, and upon a new subject: my son is of the same opinion: we will send a copy of them to our friend Guébriac, who will be delighted with them, as he was with your *Court of Love*. One word more respecting our readings: yesterday we read the eleventh book of the first volume of M. Arnauld's *Perpétuité de la Foi* (Perpetuity of Faith); he answers some attacks and accusations thrown out against him by the minister Claude. Good heavens, what arguments! what harmony!

how he defeats his antagonist every moment! We thought of you, supposing that you would have been delighted, and that the book was worthy of you; and this was the eulogium we pronounced upon it.

I informed you, in my last, of my plan for extricating you out of your present difficulty; this is an idea which must be natural to you, and you may make what use of it you please; you know whether I shall want entreaty, when my signature is necessary. Our Marquis is to be in Paris on Sunday the twenty-second. I am told he will be surprised to find, on his arrival, an order from Provence to go and join you; but I have so good an opinion of him, as to suppose he will be very happy to pay you this visit: and if it were otherwise, and he should have some regret at eighteen to leave the carnival, this very reason at eighteen would make me think it still more proper that his youth should be improved at this beautiful period in the bosom of his family: he is in a situation where he can no longer act the child, and I doubt that he still blends a little of this character with that of the Colonel. He is not *done enough,* as Madame de La Fayette says: another boiling up at the corner of your fire, will be of infinite service; and if it please God that he should return to Paris with the Chevalier, it will be a great blessing to him: are not you of this opinion? You will have infinite joy in embracing this dear child, and not without reason. You have said not a word respecting the Chevalier's health; this, perhaps, is a good sign. I rejoice with him that M. de Beauvilliers, after having nine girls, has at length had the wit to beget a son: he has followed the advice you gave to Guitaud; if he had been vexed, and changed the cards, he would never have had an heir; this fancy is laughable enough. One of yours last night made my son laugh heartily. It was upon the flying report that M. d'Ormesson would be Chancellor; "Brother," say you, "I wish my mother would marry him, she would then be the *chancellor's lady,* and we should go to Chaville." There is no explaining this flight, yet it almost killed us with laughter. This passage would have a

fine effect in your *select* readings; I defy you to say it, and derive any benefit from it for the community. I now return to Madame de Beauvilliers; if you or the Chevalier have occasion to write to him again, it seems to me that a compliment you had received from Brittany, in testimony of my joy, would be very natural, and shorter than the calculations that are sometimes made. Adieu, my love; God conduct this letter, and may it arrive at a time when your heart is somewhat at ease. It has snowed extremely for these two days; this is the first time I have imagined it was winter. My daughter-in-law is still at Rennes, blockaded by the snow.

LETTER 971

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, January 29, 1690.

Your letters have not yet arrived, at which I am melancholy and vexed, without being surprised: I am much more astonished when I see the couriers arrive in such tremendous weather. The waters have been so much out, that my daughter-in-law, tired with being detained at Rennes, ventured to return, and was bold enough to ford her way on horseback, and the water was so deep that her horse swam for several paces; instead of being well received after this exploit, she was severely scolded; she wanted to be drowned, and we, who know what drowning is, could not forgive her. She hopes that the peril to which she exposed herself, will be the means of producing a reconciliation with you, for having left me for three whole weeks; she went with so much reluctance, that she deserves consideration even upon this score. We have been confined to the house for these ten or twelve days; but if it should be fine weather only for two days, we shall find the walks as dry as at Livry.

I had earlier intelligence than you of your son's ar-

rival at Paris in good health. If it be true that the Marquis waits for your answer to repair to Grignan, the carnival will be over. I send you what Beaulieu has written to me; as this extravagance made us laugh, we hope it will have the same effect on you. I send you also some more verses against gaming; but I always find, to the honour of Dangeau, that he is a constant exception to this almost general rule. I wish you could find a purchaser for your corps: it is the constant cry, that there are times when the want of money is not perceptible throughout France; I, who begin to be of the contrary opinion, wish it were the case at present. M. d'Arles would be very happy, not to find any to build with; his council of conscience is very large, and very commodious, if he approves of this last loan; the residence, I think, might well be dispensed with; but what will be complete, and what I expect from the wise heads of that country, is that the Archbishop will grant both: he will build, and not reside; he will borrow, and not pay. Fie, fie, as you say, upon foolish heads, that spoil all, and even destroy society! It was your fault that I did not do justice to M. de La Garde sooner, and I scold you for it; would you have me possessed of the gift of divination? I reasoned justly, according to appearances. Secure me the friendship of this good and holy man; you are bound to do so. You have not told me at what game the treasurer of your Province ruined himself: with our poor d'Harouïs [1], it was from a desire to please everybody; this was his foible; he found it was impossible to refuse. I do not excuse him, but this shows, at least, that the best things in the world may be perverted, when they are not regulated by judgment; but it is so rare a failing, that never, perhaps, will such another example be met with, founded on the abuse of true generosity. You are prudent, my child, in continuing at Grignan; this may be called consulting our council of conscience: those who robbed Madame de La Fayette did not consult theirs; they took from my poor friend, who was gone to lie down from lan-

[1] Treasurer-General of the States of Brittany.

guor after dinner, five hundred crowns in louis-d'ors, which were in a little cabinet, to which none had access but her two maids, her valet-de-chambre, and footman. She can suspect no one of these: they have all been interrogated, but without effect; and she still lives with these people, which is most unpleasant; for the loss of the money would create no great inconvenience, as her children are so capable of assisting her directly with such a sum; but to be still served by a person who has made so free with her cash, is enough to disturb a woman already oppressed with so many complaints. I knew that M. de La Trousse kept his chamber; can this be called a cure? Beaulieu highly extols the Marquis's conduct, but he has not yet forgiven M. de La Trousse. M. du Bois [1] has sent me his book upon *La Véritable Religion* (True Religion), and the *Mœurs de l'Eglise Catholique* (Manners of the Catholic Church), translated from St. Augustin. The name of this saint, and the reputation of the translator, will induce us to read it; though after *Abbadie*, *Pascal*, and *l'Histoire de l'Eglise* (The History of the Church), it is almost martyrdom; at least we think it so, our minds are so biased in their favour.

I wish you as good a state of health as I enjoy; all my little ridiculous complaints have disappeared: when it pleases God, they will return; but I tell you my present situation. We have good milk here, and good cows; we are much disposed to skim the cream off this good milk, and to mix it with coffee and sugar; this, my child, is a very good thing, and will be a great comfort to me during Lent. Du Bois approves it for the stomach and colds, and this, in a word, is the milk-coffee, or coffee-milk, of our friend Alliot. This is all a person can say to you, who has no letter to answer, and who *hears and sees little,* like La Fontaine's pigeon [2]. But, my dear Comtesse, I think much of you; I am wholly occupied with you; I feel everything

[1] Philippe Goibaud-du-Bois, of the French Academy, author of several translations of *St. Augustin* and *Cicero.*

[2] See the Fable of *The Two Pigeons,* Fab. 170.

that concerns you, sensibly; I am always with you at Grignan; I pay my respects and compliments to all the inhabitants; I nurse the Chevalier, pity him, make melancholy reflections upon his situation, and feel all the consequences; I converse with the Comte, whom I love better than he loves himself; I amuse myself with Pauline; I reflect with M. de La Garde; I give the prelates some raps on the knuckles; I sigh with the Dean; I expect the Marquis; and, above all, I passionately love my dear child; I praise her good head, her good conduct, and wish she may persevere in her fortitude.

LETTER 972

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, February 1, 1690.

We have nothing but a succession of snow, rain, and winds that blow almost a hurricane; but when these tempests have subsided, the days will be long and fine; the worst is, that, let the weather be ever so good, and the time pass ever so swiftly, you cannot touch your revenues: good God, what a horrid anticipation! ninety and ninety-one, and as far as we can look forward [1]; never was there such a dissipation: we may be sometimes a little out of our road; but to be plunged over head, out of all reach, is a thing that ought never to be. Such a subject cannot be discussed at a distance, for answers are necessary; but we may sigh, and, whatever grief may await us, we would rather know all than live in ignorance. I want, as you say, the map and the key of your sentiments; I must enter into your affliction, friendship requires it. I comprehend that the only remedy that could be useful to you, would be fatal to your interest at Court, and your reputation in the Prov-

[1] M. de Grignan being compelled, for the sake of his affairs, to transfer the salary of his post for the years 1690 and 1691, had retired to Grignan to pass the winter, instead of spending it at Aix and Marseilles, or taking a journey to Court.

ince: you know better than any one that this is not the proper way to fill a post, and that hiding yourself in your Castle, without knowing how to get out of it, is not the proper way to spend a whole winter. It is happy for you, as you said the other day, that the misfortunes of your poor friends soften yours; it is a great relief to be able to talk of them, and to receive mutual comfort from each other; but I am very sensible that, in your present situation, it is impossible to read, and it is only in jest that I tease you upon this subject; how is it possible to be amused with past times, when the present inflicts such bitter pangs? I know what this situation is; one reads the same page twenty times over; and I assure you, that, well as my son reads, I am so distracted, and take such frequent journeys into Provence, that I could easily comprehend your travels, if you were obstinately bent upon reading. All I wonder at is, that God preserves your health in the midst of so much oppression. How sincerely I pity you! for how fatal is the present state of your affairs to your poor boy's establishment! He is at length at Paris; it is true, he was somewhat tardy in leaving the garrison, but he is now paying his court at Versailles. I am informed that he hopes to sell his corps; this is good news. I am always uneasy when I think of his being alone upon that great theatre; I imagine, after he has been there a short time, he will think of nothing but the pleasure of visiting you. Persevere, my love, in talking to me of yourself, without fearing to tire me; my friendship is better pleased to share your grief, than to be unacquainted with it. You walk about your buildings, and expose yourself to the north wind and the sun, as imprudently as if you had not *Wisdom*[1] by your side. I have shown my son a letter in which he is mentioned; he says a thousand kind, and a thousand ridiculous, things for that part which relates to his wife; but I am not paid for wasting my time in telling you all these. Nothing can be more pleasant than what you say of the death of the Marquis d'Alluie, and the consequences

[1] M. de La Garde.

you draw from it to begin the assault; if I had said as much, you would have made a great noise, and would have treasured it as you did the account of the Visitation. I am very much pleased with Pauline's letter, I have not time to answer it to-day; you will laugh when I tell you I am in a hurry. It is true, that I am not often at a loss for time; but we have here at present two men of great sense; one has been ten years with M. d'Alet, the other is an advocate; these men would do well at Paris; I am going to receive them. The Parliament of Rennes have this day met again in their fine palace, and the whole city re-echoes with acclamations, and is illuminated with bonfires. I answer my dear little Adhémar [1] with the greatest friendship; poor child! how happy she is, if she can be contented! there can be no doubt of this—but you understand me.

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*LETTER 973

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

The Rocks, February 5, 1690.

This date will at first sight present to you a solitude and a desert. My son and his wife spend a considerable portion of their time here: they have both very good sense. It was here your letter (of sixth of January) found me. But, my dear cousin, before I tell you what I am doing here, I must begin with the church, and I return a thousand thanks to our prelate [2] for the honour of his remembrance. I truly felt it: I had often thought of him; I even said so to the Abbé de Roquette, who came to our States; but I stopped there, and, finding myself too distant to make myself understood, I contented myself with carefully preserving in my heart the sentiments of esteem and respect which are invariably felt for him by all who have the honour of knowing him. In this disposition, his name

[1] Marie-Blanche, eldest daughter of Madame de Grignan. She was a nun at St. Marie's at Aix.

[2] The Bishop of Autun.

met my eye on opening your letter. I leave you to judge, dear cousin, what joy and what gratitude I felt at his precious remembrance. After our prelate has seen this part of my letter, I conclude he will not have time to attend to the rest of it, and that, being now in his sanctum, attending to his own affairs, I may talk to you with my usual freedom. I see no one with you but Madame de Toulongeon, and my niece, who do not deter me: I think you are in excellent company, and in such society there is no subject you might not discuss as well as in Paris. We have sometimes also very good conversations here. I came into this country, as you know, with Madame de Chaulnes, ten months ago. I was often with her at Rennes, and she took me on a very pleasant excursion into Lower Brittany. It was there the Duc de Chaulnes received an order from the King, to repair immediately to Court, and afterwards to Rome. This overturned all our plans of going to see the fleet at Brest. We returned very melancholy to Rennes, and on the twentieth of August they set out for Paris. Madame de Chaulnes came here to take leave of me, where she slept, and quitted me with real sorrow. I had hoped to return with her as I came, but Providence had arranged otherwise.

You know the rest of what concerns the journey to Rome: I was left here with part of my family, in a charming house in the midst of my business, for I have two estates in this country. I have gained nothing by the raising of money; I had no plate to dispose of. The beautiful Madelonne is at her Castle in Provence, and I am very quietly in this. I think I shall return to Paris towards the end of the summer. This is my mode of life, and my plan, God ruling over all. There is nothing I so earnestly desire as to be religious, and occupied with the only important work we all have to do. We have excellent books; but I own, that though my mind is thoroughly convinced of this great truth, my heart is not affected as I could wish it to be, and this state makes us feel how necessary to us is the grace of God. I am inclined to end here, my dear

cousin; can I stop at a better place? every subject would appear frivolous after this. I trust, however, that the good God will not be displeased at my adding a word respecting my friendship for you, which is unabated, and will last to the end of my life. I seem not to have sufficiently embraced the two amiable women who are at your side.

LETTER 974

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, February 5, 1690.

I still wonder, that notwithstanding all I know of the melancholy turn of your thoughts, you can write so freely, so pleasantly, and so humorously, as you do. Your brother is bursting at what you say of Corbinelli; and, like him, I think your comparison between the mystics and coiners, excellent indeed; the former, by dint of distilling their brains, evaporate into heretics; the latter, by blowing the fire, produce false money; if they both deserve a gibbet, I say that, with your St. Thérèse, you would be at the foot of that on which my friend was hanged. But now for a quarrel: I deny the charge you bring against me, of saying *Les Imaginaires*[1] were charming; I never made use of this expression. It is a *supposition, the subtleties of the Sieur Comte de Grignan,* as the advocate said who pleaded for La Buri. I maintain it, I did not use the word *charming*; this is a supposition of the *Dame Comtesse de Grignan*; I said *fine,* and *very fine*: the justice of their reasoning claims this eulogium, and your praising them was sufficient to give me this idea of them. Thus you see the want of good faith; but I will read them again, and, at all events, the *grand council* will not fail me.

I am satisfied with your answers to all my questions,

[1] Eighteen letters of M. Nicole, entitled *Imaginaires et Visionnaires,* which, with all the ornaments of the *Petites Lettres,* are perhaps equal to them in eloquence and solidity.

and should be sorry to have the same aversion you have to reading things twice over. I read your letters again and again, with all the sentiments they deserve, according to the different subjects; and sometimes you say such humorous things, that it is impossible not to laugh, as if the heart were light and unwounded: in short, I prefer this reading to the finest books in the world. You are astonished that I do not think of leaving this country before September; but consider that I am now in the very centre of my business in Lower Brittany, and that the sun, rising higher and higher every day, will soon bring this period round. You excite in me a strong inclination to talk nonsense, by entering so well into all I say; but you laugh too timidly at the *distinguo* [1]; what are you afraid of? have they not livings enough? I hear your answer, the influence *of others* is more than all; well, be it so, but do at least like Father Gaillard, and as they do at our neighbour's [2], where the story was thought highly amusing. At length, my dear child, you will have your son with you, provided the King's journey to Compiègne does not interfere with that of Provence. He is paying his court, I long to hear from him; he has very properly been to see Madame de La Fayette, and Madame de Chaulnes; is it possible to do better? I hope he will not forget Madame de Lavardin, as you love my friends. I have heard your *mystic* (Corbinelli) praise the book on *The Fallacy of Human Virtues,* highly; he had seen it in manuscript, being a friend of M. Esprit [3], whom he consulted in his works: he has told you a thousand times that this was an admirable book, but you attended to him no more than to his praises of Rochon; a taste for these things did not then prevail; there is a time for everything. I would very willingly read this book

[1] The Jesuit who disputed with Boileau.

[2] M. de Lamoignon.

[3] Jacques Esprit, of the French Academy, author of a book entitled *La Fausseté des Vertus Humaines.*

This work is only a heavy commentary on the *Maxims* of Rochefoucauld. A man of genius drew a system from it, in the eighteenth century, more controvertible than condemnable.

upon his recommendation. We have just finished *The History of the Conquest of Cyprus*; a very pleasing and interesting work. I am only afraid that Pauline is not sufficiently informed of the affairs of Europe; but if she is, she will be delighted with this history. The translator is a relation of the Controller-General (Pelletier); my son got through it in four days. Our carnival begins to-day; it consists in assembling five or six men and women of this neighbourhood: we shall play and eat, and if the sun should appear again, as it did yesterday, I shall walk with pleasure. The notes of the linnet, the tom-tit, and the wren, already begin to usher in the spring; this month is often milder than May, on account of your north-wind that torments us. At all events, then, we must give absolute credit to your fourscore guests; I believe, if there were too many, the Chevalier and M. de La Garde would advise you to remove the supernumeraries; for in these years of the iron age to you, you should go on gently, to avoid digging new abysses. I shall pity you very much, when you lose the two Grignans; their society and counsel are a real comfort. Like you, I should be under apprehensions for M. de La Garde, with respect to the bird-lime of the Faubourg St. Jacques [1]; in this respect there is nothing to be done, nor any precautions to take: it is the concern of the Holy Ghost alone. I want to know who is this mistress of my son, whom M. de Grignan has so unceremoniously called by a name which perhaps she does not deserve; for we can assure him, that he often thought himself in love, without ever being so. I can answer for it, that his heart never knew any real attachment till his marriage, to the great happiness of his wife and himself.

Monsieur DE SÉVIGNÉ *also writes to his Sister.*

(*Enclosed in his Mother's letter.*)

Ah! here I come at the very moment I am named: I take up the pen, and interrupt the discourse, which always

[1] This Faubourg was inhabited by Jansenists, and persons of rigid devotion, who might have torn M. de La Garde from his family, and from every tie of human affection.

appears too long when I am the subject of it. I begin by telling you, my little sister, that all your reflections on *the devil's mystic* are charming; he neglects what the vulgar call first duties, and soars straight to the seventh apartment of St. Thérèse, where he distills and blows with all his might: he is still coining, we shall see whether he will some day obtain the philosopher's stone. Who was this *mistress,* that M. de Grignan took the liberty of naming so familiarly before M. d'Auch? Had you not her in your mind, when you wrote that your sister-in-law was gone to make either a devil or an angel, in assisting at her cousin's taking the veil? Let things remain as they are, let us talk neither of angels nor devils; angels are very well in heaven, and the devil too is very well in his place. Let us leave the poor souls who are doing penance for our universal malice, in peace.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *continues and concludes her letter to her Daughter.*

My pen was taken from me: it is now restored; but I have little more to say, than to embrace you heartily, and thank you for all the expressions of kindness which I find in your unaffected and delightful letters. I have never wronged your heart, I know its value and perfection, and if I have given you a moment's uneasiness, you must forgive me. You seem to have changed your opinion, in regard to M. du Plessis [1]; tell me your reason; for I do not find he has committed any other folly than marrying. This is not a contagious disorder, and would not prevent his educating your second son properly: impart to me then why you have changed your sentiments; it is of consequence to Madame de Vins. The poor Abbé de Pile has died in your country; he went to drink the waters of Digne for vapours which were incurable.

My dear Comte, you spoil me, you destroy me, you

[1] He had belonged to the Oratory, before he was intrusted with the education of the Marquis de Grignan. Madame de Vins had thought of him as tutor to her son.

praise me, you will make me a foolish woman puffed up with vanity; this is saying everything. We love you too much here; my son would dispense with his wife's being so charmed with your perfections; we tell her of your air, your voice, your manners, which she understands but too well. For my own part, I should be extremely obliged to anyone, who would deprive me of half my sensibility with regard to your interests.

LETTER 975

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Ash-Wednesday, February 8, 1690.

Everything else failing, my dear child, tell me immediately how it happens, that Madame Reinié [1] is still with you? Do you send for her to come and consult with you, as if she were in the Rue St. Honoré, and you at the Carnavalet Mansion, or as if the distance from Paris to Grignan were not greater than the distance from Paris to Livry? I cannot conceive what could have induced her to take this second journey. Poor woman! I really am not astonished that she has pains *all over her* [2]. Good heavens! what a dear child Pauline is! so pretty, so entertaining, so sprightly, so amiable. I can fancy I see all her perfections from hence. Without wishing to commend the quality of mimicry, I must confess that it is one of the things that afford the greatest mirth: as I am persuaded that Pauline will not make a bad use of this talent, and will confine the exercise of it to her family, I am not sorry that she possesses it; and I hope to enjoy it with you some day, *God willing* being however always understood. Her brother is a tolerable ape too, but he has other business upon his hands; he is taken up with his soldiering: you will see what the Abbé says of him, and how little attention he pays to the carnival; in fact, his prudence and solid-

[1] A milliner of Paris.

[2] A favourite expression of Madame Reinié.

ity are astonishing. He takes his meals at La Poirier's without any ceremony, or great variety. I wish he would sometimes visit Madame de Coulanges, who is alone; she would be delighted with him. But what say you to this corps, for which you cannot find a purchaser? is it possible that so advantageous a bargain should not be eagerly caught at? this plainly shows the failure of money. How is it then that you manage for your son's equipage? what an increase of expense, and in what a time of scarcity! this exceeds imagination. I have told you all my thoughts upon this subject. I suppose the Marquis will be able to pay you a visit; the King's journey to Compiègne is only to review his household. I know that the strongest proof that can be given of discontinuing a pension is, not to pay it; but I asked whether this was a general evil; for you know it is not pleasant to be singular in misfortune. If the roads are as bad in your country as they are here, I pity M. de La Garde; all intercourse is nearly interrupted in this Province.

But, my dear Comtesse, how is your health? I left you indulging in bed, playing the fine lady, wishing to be nursed in your turn; this is all you will tell me; these colics are however very painful things, they are real disorders: you are ill *all over,* like Madame Reinié. Pauline is very facetious in making that verse of the *Miserere* a subject of melancholy; it is indeed a shocking thing to say *her mother conceived her in sin*: this deserves consideration, and leads to consequences. I find her little imagination has soon made comparisons that are very just. We have each our different portions and species of wit: if we ourselves were to compose the dose, we should infuse some of every kind; but we must be resigned to this, as to everything else. I find the Marquis has a good assortment, and particularly of the solid and permanent. As for you, my dear love, who have received some from so many various quarters, you would, in conscience, be obliged to communicate it, if it depended upon yourself: but why is not a traffic allowable in this respect? superfluities on one side, might be ex-

changed for deficiencies on another, and this would make all perfect; it is a pity that this is not the fashion, and that God did not think proper to fix it so. M. de Grignan would find a great sale for his spirit of justice and harmony; it is certain that he has endeavoured to set us at variance; what he said of you was so probable, that I really thought it true.

But here is a subject of contention much more serious: you say that I have read the same romances three times over; this is very insulting; these are old sins that ought to be pardoned, in consideration of the advantage I derive from being able also to read the finest works in the world, such as Abbadie's, Pascal's, Nicole's, Arnauld's, and the best histories, etc., as often. This quality does more good than harm, as it does honour to books of merit, and is so proper to pass some of the periods of life agreeably. In short, my child, it is a quality I wish you possessed; but let us embrace, why should we burden ourselves with a quarrel that must necessarily end at Easter? Let us do it now with a good grace. I ask Pauline, how she has passed her carnival, for she is at an age to enjoy it. We have had some very rational and agreeable visitors: they played incessantly, and I was left entirely at liberty. But last night, without having observed any preparation, my daughter-in-law retired an instant before supper, and immediately the servant who sets out the table entered disguised very prettily, and told us supper was ready. We went into the supper-room, which was illuminated, and found my daughter-in-law in complete masquerade in the midst of hers and our servants, who were also in masquerade; those who held the basins, those who handed the napkins, all the officers, and all the lackeys, were masked, forming a group of upwards of thirty persons, most whimsically dressed. Our surprise was very great; and the mirth and laughter which this whim occasioned, lasted all supper-time; for we knew not who waited upon us. After supper, music being provided, they all danced passe-pieds, minuets, courants, and country-dances.

At length twelve struck, and Lent began. Do you recollect, my love, the Shrove Tuesdays we have passed together, and where we slept so early in Lent? I am always delighted to find you in every period of my life, and always with the truest affection. Adieu; we all love you here, and I love and honour all there.

LETTER 976

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, February 12, 1690.

I wish, my dear Comtesse, that you had read over your last letter, and that it could have struck you as it struck us: Pauline's follies would have diverted you a second time; you recount them so humorously, that they lose nothing in the narration. We see a little imagination that catches fire, and sparkles at everything, and which, with the graces of her pretty person, never mistakes its object. My son is in love with her; he has so favourable an idea of her, that, in his opinion, she surpasses the greatest beauty: he wants to see her, and to have her portrait; and from the place where you speak of the carnival, which she feels in the marrow of her bones, he began as you know how, and, reading and laughing by turns, he at length got to the end. Do you recollect when your brother read the comedy between your son and de Sanzei? no one could help laughing that saw him. He entered, then, into this pretty scene, as well as his wife and myself, and we felt the effects of the striking passages; blowing the touch-pan; the sword being left by accident at the garrison; the young officer who was at the battle of Rocroi, where he distinguished himself so agreeably by killing the trumpeter who had waked the prince too early in the morning; Madame D****, her portrait, M. de Grignan: confess, my child, that these various subjects, brought into play by Pauline's vivacity, must necessarily produce a very humorous effect. She makes you keep the carnival whether you will or not. We

have great confidence in M. de Grignan's taste; his laugh cannot fail of calling forth the risibility of the most reserved; the suspension of the Chevalier's gout, his thinking midnight the best hour in the day, your laughing till you are ill, are strong proofs in Pauline's favour.

Monsieur DE SÉVIGNÉ *also writes to his Sister.*
(Enclosed in his Mother's letter.)

And what can I say after this, my little sister? It is precisely what I should have said myself. I laughed till I cried at this picture, which you gave us with so much fancy and vivacity. The gaiety which consists in being disposed to anything, eating pudding instead of beef, and dancing figures we have never seen, is so much suited to Pauline's age, that it is evident she acts her part naturally: but as my mother has told you all I thought upon the different scenes represented by this dear child, and as I should only sully what she says so brilliantly, I shall urge to you very strenuously what she has only slightly touched upon; this is, that we conjure you in the most serious manner possible, as does also your sister-in-law, to send us Pauline's portrait as soon as you can. Painters returning from Rome frequently pass your way; there may be some good ones at Aix: in short, we request this favour of you most affectionately and urgently. Anyone who can discompose the serious brow of M. de Grignan to the degree you represent, and who suspends the torture of the unfortunate *Sisyphus*, appears to me something more than mortal. But whilst this Captain, at one time a youth, and at another a veteran officer, was boasting of his prowess and good fortune, what said M. de La Garde? was he not diverted like the rest? You cannot imagine how much we are fascinated with Pauline's charms; let us hear of her constantly; she was so young when I saw her, that I have indeed occasion to be informed what she is at present; is there no one of your acquaintance who can give me some idea of her? In short, my beautiful little sister, assist us, in this respect, as much as you can.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *continues and concludes her letter to her Daughter.*

You see I have not exaggerated my son's infatuation: he tells it you himself. I also am somewhat curious to know where M. de La Garde was: was he in bed? had he any scruples at seeing this representation? he is, however, the foremost of Pauline's admirers. As to the portrait which my son requests so earnestly, I advise you to do nothing rashly; it will be time enough when you go to Paris or Aix: the size must be the same as yours by Ferdinand; it would be a companion to that of Madame d'Enrichemont. I find the poor Marquis is burdened with all the affairs of the house: I should fear they were too much for him, without the assistance of Vaille, who knows everybody, and who will relieve and conduct him to the Ministers; he may also be of service to him in the disposal of his corps; such a man is of real service. As you say, my child, everything now depends upon a head of eighteen, whilst all the rest, which are pretty numerous, are for various reasons incapable of acting. It is the will of God that it should be so. It will be a melancholy thing, if the Marquis cannot go to Grignan, and there drink at the fountain-head of good counsel, which he must necessarily require. I am very attentive to the sequel, and the answer you will have from Court: I do not know whether I remember right, but I think the proposal was not relished. What! does M. d'Aiguebonne wish for another defeat? it would be the height of glory for the Marquis to give him this death-stroke; in which case the good Rochon must assist Vaille: but I do not think M. de Lamoignon will make you take this step; he will advise you to get *letters of state,* till you come yourself to complete what you have so well begun; this is my opinion. At all events, inform me of your intentions; they are of the highest importance to me.

I scold you for being uneasy, when my letters do not come exactly to an hour; why should you believe I am ill, rather than that the rivers have overflowed their banks?

All the inhabitants of the Rochefoucauld Mansion are driven away by the water, after having been banished by fire; all the lower story is a pond. The water runs in our street as far as M. Le Jai's; so that you have greater reason to be astonished when the couriers do arrive. But really all that you say to me is so kind, so affectionate, so natural, there is such an air of truth in it, so affecting to my heart, that, after having corrected you for your uneasiness, I am compelled to own to you, that I find real pleasure in it. I know not why you refuse to avail yourself of the proposal respecting Bourbilly [1]: I am aware of your delicacy; but so far from seeing anything fatal in it, or that can make you think of the future, it would give me real satisfaction, by making me enjoy, during my life, the convenience you may derive from it; and the more so, as by my reserving the reversion, which these bad times render necessary, I do not see why, upon such an emergency, you may not make use of this expedient, particularly as you have the good Berbisi for a correspondent. Adieu, my dear; I am convinced that no one can love like you, except myself; but maternal affection is so natural, and filial affection so extraordinary, that whilst I am doing only my duty, you are a prodigy. I believe, however, that there is a dose of tenderness in my heart, which operates in your favour, and which other mothers do not feel; this made me say, some time ago, that I loved you with an affection formed on purpose for you.

Maréchal d'Estrées is going away for two months; he will see his brother the Cardinal, he will marry all his children, our Bretons say: in short, we shall be without a Governor. I am like M. de Grignan, I wish M. de Chaulnes would inform you of a little more than trifles; there are many degrees between seeking you by land and by water, and the secrets of an Ambassador. I should scold Coulanges for quitting the Duc; yet, if his journey were so long, he might very excusably be guilty of this incivility.

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[1] Of borrowing by mortgage upon that estate.

LETTER 977

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, February 15, 1690.

It would seem [1], my dearest love, as if nothing was thought of but attachment to you, and pleasing you; and yet it is very certain that the intention was to please others: there is nothing so easy as to deceive those who do not observe us. It must be owned that we have great cause to blush, when, having showed signs of repentance from thinking death at hand, we recover not only to life, but to all the passions that were supposed to be extinct. This certainly is very embarrassing, and would make us tremble for every dying person, since nothing but the recovery of their health can show the sincerity of their repentance: but God knows their hearts, and that is sufficient. We are frequently obliged to recur to this centre of all things: are you not, my child, plunged into the midst of impossibilities, which everywhere surround you? I really admire you, but I will not allow you to compare your anxiety to mine: I ought to forget my own situation entirely, to think of nothing but what concerns you; and this I do. All your affairs are pressing and urgent; everything is forced, essential, and exposed to public observation; and I should not think you more to be pitied, if you were commanded, upon the spot, to create something out of nothing. This is what oppresses my heart, and occupies all my thoughts; I think not of myself; my troubles are nothing; I am not compelled to anything: my affairs are somewhat in dis-

[1] All the first part of this Letter refers to particulars of the situation and society of Madame de Grignan, too intimate to be understood. But, obscure as it appears, it shows the entire confidence the daughter had in the mother, which was greater than could be supposed even from the letters of Madame de Sévigné; for it is evident that Madame de Sévigné designedly, and in concert with her daughter, avoided replying to certain subjects. This confidence is honourable to them both, and it particularly restores to the character of Madame de Grignan the good opinion that many persons withhold from her.

order, but a short absence will bring all things right; a comfortable, agreeable, convenient retreat, equally serviceable to my salvation as to my affairs, if I know how to avail myself of it, and which fortunately happens when you are in Provence: you must acknowledge, therefore, my best child, that I ought to feel no evils but those you endure. Correct your ideas, then; think of me, only to love me; I have long been overpaid by your sincere friendship, and extreme gratitude.

I conjure you to give me the sequel of the romance, in which I find Pauline acts a good part, as she is upon terms with the Princesse her mother, and sleeps in her apartment. It was a fine circumstance in her travels through France, to forget Italy; we request that the first time she goes to Rome, she will not forget to take Paris in her way.

Beaulieu informs me that the corps is sold; and the Marquis writes me a little letter full of affection; he seems to me quite overwhelmed with business, and so am I, in constantly regretting the absence of his uncle, who is not even in Paris at a time when he would be of so much service to him. It would be very unfortunate if the Marquis could not visit you in Provence. You have seen by Madame de La Fayette's letters that poor M. de Montausier, after having been ruined both *body* and *mind,* inclines at present to yield all the *mental* part, and retain only the *corporeal*[1]; this seems to me prettily expressed. Alas! this fall of our poor Abbé may justly be called being reduced to a mere *body.*

The praises you bestow upon my letters, are so superior to their merit, that if I were not convinced that you would never unfold or read them again, I should be terrified at the thoughts of seeing myself betrayed into print by one of my friends. Voiture and Nicole! good heavens, what names! and then what expressions you use, my dear child!

[1] M. de Montausier died on the 17th of May following, at the age of eighty.

Corbinelli, whom I have not informed of your wickedness, will write to you by the Marquis; he is going to dine with him at Madame de Coulanges's; he is satisfied with his understanding. M. du Bois tells me he has sent you his book.

But listen to a miracle: Maréchal de La Ferté's lady [1] is so truly converted, that it is impossible to be more sincere; she is in the hands of good workmen, she finds nothing too warm. Ninon has been astonished, shaken; the Holy Spirit blows wherever it listeth: but how abundantly it shed its influence upon the first four ages of the rising church! what a number of martyrs! the history of your Bishop de Grasse is excellent. What Popes there were at that time! all martyrs. What Bishops! where shall we meet with their likeness now?

It is reported that Comte d'Estrées is to marry Mademoiselle de Croissi; and Mademoiselle d'Estrées, M. de Torcy [2]; this is a fine medley: it is, I believe, upon this account that the Maréchal (d'Estrées) is gone. You will have the Cardinal, his brother, in your Province, but you will not see him. It is delightful weather, all the birds are in full chorus; I walk, and read your letters with extreme affection; I should be very sorry if I could not enjoy them a second time.

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[1] It is not the scandalous chronicle of Bussy only, that sets forth the character of Madame de La Ferté, the worthy sister of the famous Comtesse d'Olonne; the *Original Letters* of MADAME prove that this satire has not overcharged the portrait. It must be owned that Madame de Sévigné was not just in placing Ninon by the side of such a woman; Ninon, who not only never dishonoured or deceived a husband, but who even remained constant to her lover; she was too well skilled in voluptuousness to degenerate into licentiousness.

[2] These two marriages did not take place.

LETTER 978

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, February 19, 1690.

If you could see me, my dear beautiful child, you would order me to keep Lent, and, finding that I had no ailments, you would be convinced, as I am, that God had bestowed so good a state of health upon me only to make me obey the commands of the church. We live well here; we have not, indeed, the river Sorgue [1]; but we have the sea, so that we are in no want of fish. We have butter every week from Prévalaie: I like it, and eat it as if I were a native of Brittany. We eat bread and butter often, and we always think of you when we do so; my son marks all his teeth upon it, and what pleases me most is, that I can leave the marks of all mine too: we shall soon strew the slices with fine herbs and violets: at night we have pottage with a little butter, according to the custom of the country, good prunes and fine spinach: in short, this is not fasting, and we say, with confusion, *it is very difficult to serve the Holy Church*! But why do you find fault with milk in my coffee? It is because you dislike milk; for you would otherwise think it the most charming thing in the world. I drink it on Sunday mornings from choice; you think to decry it in saying it is good to make a poor consumptive being just breathe: really, this is a high encomium, and if it makes a dying person breathe, it will make a healthy person live very agreeably. Here ends the chapter on Lent.

But a word of sermons; how I pity you for being so often obliged to listen to such long insipid discourses! This patience M. Nicole could never inspire me with, though he has written so good a treatise upon the subject. When I am as good as M. de La Garde, if ever God

[1] The river Sorgue abounds in fish, and waters the county of Venaissin.

grants me this grace, I shall like all sermons; in the meanwhile, I content myself with the Gospels as explained by M. Le Tourneux; these are real sermons, and nothing but the vanity of man could load modern discourses with their present contents. We sometimes read the Homilies of St.-Jean-Chrysostom; these are divine, and please us so highly, that I persist in not going to Rennes till Passion week, to avoid being exposed to the eloquence of the preachers who hold forth in behalf of the Parliament. I recollect the rigid fast you formerly observed on Shrove-Tuesday, living solely upon self-love, with which you seasoned every sauce, except that which might have nourished you; but even in this your vanity was deceived, for your face was covered with pimples from the heat of your blood; you contemplated your own essence, like a pigeon in a pie; what a ridiculous whim! This was your reply to La Mousse, who said to you, "Mademoiselle, all these charms will decay." "Yes, Sir, but they are not decayed yet." Good heavens, who could suppose that such a person could neglect herself as you have done, and become so clever and excellent a woman! We want now to give you some vanity, some regard for yourself: in this you are very deficient, while you possess too much for others. An equipage, horses, mules, subsistence; in short, to live only from hand to mouth, and yet make such a considerable expense, without knowing where to find the sinews of war; this, my child, can be done by no one but you: but I conjure you to think of Bourbilly; here, perhaps, you may find some relief, after having in vain hoped for it elsewhere.

Madame de Chaulnes tells me, that the Marquis is a fine fellow, that he is coming to see her: she does not think he will have time to go to Provence. I believe the corps is sold; I knew it before you. It is true, that your son is a stout lad, but he is not so dark as Boufflers; I cannot bear the comparison, unless it be to run like him the race of good fortune. The Marquis should give you a more circumstantial account of his first journey to Versailles; it is this we want to know, and whether the King took any

notice of him, or spoke to him: it is upon such an occasion that a father or an uncle would have been of infinite service. I enclose my little note from the Abbé Bigorre: it pleases us, for his intelligence is more accurate than that of others. If the women and courtiers, who think M. de Chaulnes is a long while bringing about this pacification, were informed of all that has been done these eighteen years against Rome, they would be of opinion, that if the Ambassador succeed at last, it must be a master-piece of address and good fortune. There are fifteen or sixteen chiefs, which our leisure has made us acquainted with, and which are nearly of as much weight as those who occasioned the suppression of the children of Madame de Mondonville [1]. M. de Grignan knows this; but you have not time to discuss these trifles; it is more expeditious to censure, judge, and be impatient. Cardinal d'Estrées has arrived. I know not whether he will think proper to declare himself the Ambassador's antagonist; we shall see. He passed through Paris on his way to Versailles, and sent a gentleman to Madame de La Fayette; he is much her friend. The verses of our Adhémar are very pretty; those upon play are indifferent, but good, as you say, for *bouts rimés*. I send you some of La Scuderi's for Coulanges; what think you of them? They are said to be the last she will write, as she is going gradually with M. de Montausier [2]. It is proper to think of this journey, my dear child, after having lived so long; nothing prepares us so well for it as reading, and seeing an infinite number of persons, younger than ourselves, go first; in short, it is the common destiny. But B****'s fate is whimsical, to be ruined by dint of usury! The fall of our poor d'Harouïs is much easier to comprehend; his passion was to please everybody, without bounds, and without reason; for it eclipsed every other passion, and even justice: this is another prodigy, but it is dying by a nobler sword. You know M. du Bois's

[1] She founded the Establishment of Female Children, suppressed in 1686.

[2] Madame de Scuderi did not die till 1701; her age was ninety-four.

work, and your taste is exquisite. It confirms most fully the truth of our religion; I think it admirable. I have not yet got to the *Mœurs de l'Eglise* [1]: I will not thank M. du Bois, he is too happy in obtaining your approbation; but I will thank M. de Grignan for his goodness in remaining with you and his delightful family. For my part, I am always with you, as I have told you; and you constantly engage my thoughts in these woods, where the sun shines as in Provence, and where I read your letters over and over again, with so much pleasure.

LETTER 979

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, February 22, 1690.

The letter you wrote to the Abbé Charrier is a master-piece of its kind; it was really a difficult task for you, unacquainted as you were with the subject; but you have made so good a use of the Abbé de Kimperlé, Madame de Sévigné, M. Charrier's son, and Madame de Grignan, that there is not a single word without its weight, or that is not necessary. I am convinced that you did not feel all the excellence of this note, it escaped you: but I restore it to the honour that is due to it, and am delighted with it; it could not come more opportunely to assist me in thanking the Abbé, for having concluded a very important affair for me in Lower Brittany; I think I have acquitted myself in sending him your charming letter.

To come to you, my dear child; you say nothing of *the first minister*; this affair, however, must necessarily be attended with consequences. How have you contrived about your son's equipage? I am beforehand with you in the intelligence of his corps being sold. I do not think he will have time to pay you a visit; this grieves me, as well on your account as on his. I am told he is a stout lad, and

[1] *Manners of the Church.* [Translation.]

that his father's figure must not be expected: I hear, at the same time, much good of him; he is polite and discreet; but it is a misfortune upon his first appearance at Court, that the little Colonel was not supported by any of his relations; for my part, considering how much he had upon his hands, I think he has acquitted himself admirably.

M. de Chaulnes has written a long and friendly letter to me from Rome, and complains that I abandon him in his solitude: I tell him, it is because I have not time to write, that I am overwhelmed with business, and so on. You will find by Bigorre's little note, that we have reason to hope those long and difficult negotiations will, at length, be crowned with success, and that what might be considered impossible to an Ambassador less accustomed than M. de Chaulnes to the manners of Rome, will infallibly be effected. You will, at least, find that the King is satisfied with his Ambassador, and pays him well. Cardinal d'Estrées, who is returned from Turin, has seen Madame de La Fayette: this furnishes matter for much conversation; but I believe Rome will not be forgotten: it is said that His Eminence speaks of the Pope, but does not mention the Ambassador, which appears to me as difficult as playing at the game in which you must not say *yes* nor *no*.

Is it true that M. du Plessis has returned to Paris? You have not told me what made you change your opinion respecting him; I understood that you were satisfied with him. The solicitude and care you express for your mamma, is kind indeed: I am still in good health; the abstinence of Lent is salutary; send us some of your fine Lisle trouts, and we will send you some butter that will delight your heart. A thousand friendly regards to M. de Grignan: I flatter myself that if he were here, he would be tempted to walk through all the different alleys, which would amuse him. Adieu, my beloved child, I cannot tell you how much I love you, nor how necessary your affection is to the happiness of my life.

LETTER 980

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, February 26, 1690.

I could not have believed that I should have wept so much for La Chau; but it is impossible to read your account of his poor wife's unfeigned and violent affliction, without being affected to tears. This is, indeed, a peculiar misfortune, and a fate which nothing could prevent. The man is in haste, he wants to get to his journey's end: he is advised, for very weighty reasons, not to expose himself, or, at least, not to go into the little boat; but he will listen to no one, he must go, he must be punctual to his appointment; Death is waiting for him at a particular spot upon the Rhône; he must meet him there, and perish. Good heavens, my dear child, how all this is arranged! Everyone sees his own fate in this accident, and his wife's grief becomes ours: as we are exposed to similar perils, it is our own interest that makes us weep, when we suppose we are lamenting the misfortunes of others. Christianity dictates to us that we should think first of this poor man's salvation; but his wife afterwards claims our pity for the loss of four thousand livres: if the dead body should not float, or the violence of the Rhône should throw it beyond Arles upon some unfrequented shore, Providence will dispose of this gold, sewed up in his wet coat, as of the rest.

I highly approve the resolution of not sending for the Marquis, this is the surest way: the journey would be both expensive and fatiguing, and productive of no good but the mere gratification of your affection: bear this like many other things, and rather wait till he is a Brigadier or Major-General, than make him lose his time now. Beaulieu informs me, that he is quite overwhelmed with business, and that he attends to nothing else. Is it possible, that he should have visited Madame de La Fayette before Madame de Vins? I blame him; I am as jealous upon this

occasion as you are, for I frequently put myself in your place; every reason should have induced him to have flown to Madame de Vins; she wrote to me the other day that she longed to see him, and to observe the difference and transition from infancy to youth. He has waited upon Madame de Lavardin, and will have time to pay her another visit.

M. de Grignan has resolved upon a very precipitate journey; it is difficult to avoid such courses, when we command singly in a Province, whether for the service of the King, or the honour of the post. You never examine thoroughly into this business, except for M. de Grignan; this is natural enough: but the example should extend farther. A word of Cardinal de Forbin [1]: the courier who brought the news of his promotion was only seven days upon the road. M. de Beauvais was transported with joy. The King is perfectly satisfied with his Ambassador; it is very probable that he will perform all the miracles that are to be wrought at Rome. Madame de Chaulnes writes to me in a style of triumph; she is in high spirits, and not without reason. We must, however, write to the new Cardinal; I have just been doing so, and I am sure you will not fail to do the same. *No enemies,* my dear child; let this be your maxim, it is equally Christian and politic: I not only say *no enemies,* but also *many friends*; you have felt the good effects of these in your law-suit; you have a son; you may stand in need of those who you may now think can never be of service to you. We are deceived; see how Madame de La Fayette abounds with friends on every side, and of all ranks. She has a hundred arms, and they all serve her; her children feel it, and thank her daily for her courteous disposition; an obligation which she owes to M. de La Rochefoucauld, and of which her family reaps the benefit. I am certain that you have been of this opinion for many years.

You explain Madame Reinié's conduct very well; it

[1] Toussaint de Forbin de Janson, Bishop of Beauvais, was included in the promotion of eleven Cardinals made by Alexander VIII. in the beginning of February, 1690.

is droll to think of her leaving Paris, her husband, all her business, to fly for three or four months *all over* Provence asking for money, without getting any, fatiguing herself, returning, after being at great expense, and getting the rheumatism into the bargain! for recollect she has pains ALL OVER her; and such as at length have defeated you.

I am delighted at Pauline's partiality to M. Nicole; it is a proof that she reads him with attention; this taste gives me the highest opinion of her understanding; I also like her anger, that the Bishops do not fight for promotion. But, my dear, on your honour do you believe it right, to give us only the first volume of the romance of the *princesse*, the *infanta*, or the *first minister*, so charming as we thought it[1]? I will not allow you to stop here; I insist upon knowing what is become of the Princesse's good and just resolution? I am afraid it has vanished, by the necessity of the times, the want of a *minister*, the sudden journey, the impossibility of collecting *the leaves of the Sibyl*, idly and incautiously scattered to the winds for ten years. In short, I fear your good intentions will come to nothing, as I have so often found during the last twenty years: this story, however, requires a continuation, but it should not be too serious with regard to your affairs. I wish also to be informed of the success of M. Prat's journey to the enraged lover of the Princesse *Truelle*. I should like to know who were the confidants of the *first minister* and *the favourite*; and who received the courier. Tell me if you are still satisfied with *Flame*[2]; he is a very considerable personage in your household. I want to know some particulars respecting the Comte's journey, and if the treasurer will do as he wishes: here are a number of questions, my dearest child, for which I apologise. It is kind of you to love my letters; when you receive three at a time, you say you are rich; but what fatigues do they not occasion you! They are so very long, that you should not answer them

[1] This was an account, in the form of a romance, of what passed in M. de Grignan's family.

[2] M. de Grignan's house-steward.

minutely. Adieu, my love; how does Lent agree with you? for my part, I like it extremely. I took a mess of milk-coffee this morning: I am not yet surfeited with it, nor with sermons, for we read none but those of M. Le Tourneux and St.-Jean-Chrysostom. It is delightful weather, the winter is past, and we have a prospect of spring that is superior to spring itself.

[*N.B. The above Letter is the last from the Mother to the Daughter. But as Madame de Sévigné did not leave Brittany for Provence till eight months afterwards, she must have written a great many more during this period, which however have not come to light. Perhaps they will some day be found, unless the same motive which prevented Madame de Simiane*[1] *from adding them to the rest, should have caused them to be destroyed.*]

*LETTER 981

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to M.* DE COULANGES.

The Rocks, March 18, 1690.

I dispatch this sheet, after three others which I wrote to you three days ago, to tell you, my dear cousin, that I am very imperfect; which is a truth I wish to establish at Rome as well as at Paris. I have read your charming letter several times; the last when walking in these woods, whose silence gave an additional zest to your verse, your prose, your serious and your playful style. I reflected on the mode of life you are leading at Rome, blended with profaneness and *santissimo* (holiness); and on the beautiful gardens, where art and nature display their different wonders. I thought of the bowling-green, into which you climbed with the agility of twenty; of the advantage men

[1] Pauline, daughter of Madame de Grignan and Madame de Sévigné's grand-daughter, who published the *first edition* of "The Letters," and afterwards greatly regretted having done so.

possess over women, whose every step is measured and bounded; and of the number of days and years I might walk in the ground-floor of our groves, without once finding myself in this bowling-green. I think Madame de Scuderi's madrigal very pretty and very flattering; and I also think you fortunate in having the Abbé de Polignac [1] in your society. I am pleased at his remembrance; he is one of the most agreeable men I know: he is acquainted with everything; talks on every subject; has all the good-humour, sprightliness, and courtesy, that are desirable in the intercourse of the world. I believe I formerly expressed myself to you in the same way of him, when we were in treaty together respecting the marriage of his brother with Mademoiselle de Grignan [2]. Returned from my walk, I wrote to you, intending to talk of him, and I forgot it; what say you to this vile omission, my poor Coulanges? We must no longer trust to anything, and less to ourselves than to others: from that day, I have scolded myself, treated myself with coldness, and refused to walk with myself alone: I consider myself unworthy of my own confidence; and the only comfort I can find, is in desiring you to reconcile me to myself, by telling the worthy Abbé in what way I forget him, and in what way I remember him. This is what I had to say to you; advising you to make him your friend rather than your rival, and to love me always as much as I love you, if you can.

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*LETTER 982

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

The Rocks, June 22, 1690.

I have received two letters from you, my dear cousin, a long one from Paris, and a short one from Versailles. I should have answered the first, if I had known where to

[1] Afterwards Cardinal.

[2] Françoise-Julie Adhémar de Monteil, afterwards Marquise de Vibraye.

direct to you. I begin by approving highly the change in my niece's name. There are many examples of this kind; but if there were not, I should like her to be the first to set one. All your reasons are excellent. Let us then be Comtesse de Dalet [1]; it is a noble and good name: my niece is very fortunate in having so beautiful a choice. If I had anything to wish in this instance, it would be, that, for the facility of pronunciation, you would permit me to drop the article, as did my old friend the Comtesse de Dalet, of the family of d'Estaing, and instead of saying strictly the Comtesse de Dalet, you would be content with the Comtesse d'Alet.

My dear niece, if I can obtain this favour, no one will support more zealously the justice of the change. To speak seriously, it is the best thing possible; but you will do well to call your son Comte de Langheac when he makes his entry into the world, because it is the name of his family. When we are of high birth, we must alter nothing, and take no new name without absolute necessity. You must, I think, have great pleasure and full employment in the education of this dear child. He must now be a great boy; and if you and your father have not given him wit, you will have to render an account at the tribunal of wits.

I return to you, my dear cousin; I am apt to wander. I am not surprised that the King has received graciously the offer of your services: he knows well the hearts of Frenchmen, and has no reason to doubt yours; but there is no place for you, except the one Providence has assigned you. I am delighted that you have adopted the excellent maxim of submitting to his will: but for this, the unfortunate would be frantic, and must be chained; but with submission, we are respectable in this world, and have a right to expect solid happiness in the other. Thus, my dear cousin, we are gainers; and I am so struck with the neces-

[1] The name of one of M. de Bussy's estates, which Madame de Coligny at that time assumed, apparently wishing to avoid taking the name of her second husband, M. de La Rivière, and keeping that of her first, which was besides only the name of an estate.

sity of this doctrine, that I love you the better for your sentiments. I wish however that you had obtained what you desired. I make no reply to the news you told me a fortnight ago; it is useless and ridiculous to reason at a distance; the state of public affairs changes daily.

My daughter is in Provence with her husband. Her son is at the lion's mouth, like yours: he is at the head of the Grignan regiment. He would have been satisfied with this place ten years hence; judge then of the delight of having it at the age of seventeen. I am very tranquil in this solitude, where I have had the honour and the pleasure of seeing M. T**** [1]. These are pleasant periods of life. There are many beauties here now, which did not exist then; and there were some then, which are lost now. I agree with you in what you say of him. I find him, both with regard to the past and the present, as you find him. I am glad that he remembers me with pleasure; I do the same by him. You are fortunate in having such excellent society; mine does not displease me. My son has good sense and a cultivated understanding, which rouses mine. So has his wife, and particularly so great a share of intelligence, that it surprises us, and makes us suppose she has passed her life at Court, though she has never been out of this Province. Judge if I can be better off. I calculate, however, upon being at Paris this winter; and upon loving you always, my dear cousin, for many reasons. This is one:

MARIE DE RABUTIN.

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[1] In all the old editions it is stated that this must have been either M. de Toulongeon or M. de Trichâteau, the friend and neighbour of Bussy, of whom there are several letters in the Collection of the latter: but it was neither: it was Roger de Pardaillan de Gondrin, Marquis de Termes.

*LETTER 983

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

The Rocks, July 12, 1690.

I wish to write to you, my dear cousin, upon the battle gained by M. de Luxembourg [1]: it is a very natural subject. Do you not find that God always takes the part of the King; and that nothing can give greater lustre to the fame of his arms, nor come more opportunely, than this victory? Such great news always occasions great anxiety to those who are interested, or who fear they are so. The little Grignan, who was in M. de Bouffler's corps, may have been one of those who were detached to join M. de Luxembourg. I am also interested in two or three young persons. Till I have discovered what is become of them, my heart will beat a little, and then I have a general pity for all who have perished in this battle. I have been grieved for Villarceaux: there are some terrible circumstances attending his death. I also pity the poor mothers, Madame de Saucour and Madame de Calvisson. The young widows I do not pity so much; they will either be their own mistresses, or change their masters. I share in the King's honour, and in the good effects of this intelligence spread over all Europe, which we shall feel in more places than one. I am the friend and servant of M. de Luxembourg and his sister [2], to whom I have just written. In short, my dear cousin, you see by what I have said, that I have not wanted employment for these four or five days; and, indeed, these emotions are occasionally necessary in

[1] The battle of Fleurus, near Charleroi, where the French defeated the Dutch army. Out of seven thousand prisoners, there were nine hundred officers. They took besides two hundred pairs of colours, the whole of the artillery and all the baggage. Notwithstanding this defeat, the Prince of Orange appeared again three months afterwards with an equally strong army.

[2] The Duchesse de Meckelbourg, formerly the beautiful Châtillon, whose charms and favours had rendered more than one hero happy and guilty.

the country; we should otherwise easily forget that we have a soul. The quiet we here enjoy, is akin to lethargy. Thank God, I am thoroughly revived, and never did Hungary-water produce a greater effect.

Tell me if your son was at this battle. He was in the number of the young men for whom I was interested. God has not conducted you, my dear cousin, through the most agreeable paths of life. They will be, however, more safe; and, after all, life is a short journey. If we were wise, we should have but one concern in the world, that of our salvation. You have a perfect, excellent friend, whom I honour and respect highly, who would not contradict me in this truth. It is useless to name him: I defy you to confound him with the rest [1]. I thank you, my dear niece, for your compliance. I thought we should not quarrel for a syllable more or less.

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*LETTER 984

From the Comte DE BUSSY *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, July 16, 1690.

The battle of Fleurus, my dear Madame, is already forgotten; and do you know why? Because they talk of a victory gained by the King's fleet over the English and Dutch [2]. It is not so complete as the first, but neither has it cost so dear. Did you ever hear of so many and so long a train of prosperities, my dear cousin? and do you not think that to the attributes of Louis the Great, the Victorius, and the Well-served, we ought to add that of the Fortunate? The three or four young persons, in whom you are so much interested, were either not at Fleurus, or were not wounded. My son is at Mont-Royal, in a corps which the Dauphin has withdrawn from thence, to place in his own army. Everybody pities the Villarceaux, father

[1] The Duc de Beauvilliers. [Marginal note by Bussy-Rabutin.]

[2] By Tourville, in the Channel. According to Avrigny, the combined enemies lost six ships.

and son; and upon this subject we remark how much Providence sports with the conduct of men. Villarceaux, the father, refused the Order of Knighthood, that his son might have it, and by this proceeding gained general esteem; and it was the badge of this Order which destroyed the son. He displayed it, to attract the respect and regard of those who had taken him. Disputing among themselves who should have a prisoner of such consequence, they killed him, because they could not agree. There are young widows, in consequence of this battle, with whom we ought to rejoice on the death of their husbands; and other ladies, with whom we ought to condole on the lives of theirs, who have escaped with slight wounds. The gods Hymen and Love have long been at variance. You say humorously, my dear cousin, that great news is sometimes necessary in the country. Certainly the scene there is too dull, and we should die if such events did not rouse us. With respect to what concerns myself, I have to tell you that I am leaving the Court for Chaseu, very well pleased with the treatment I have received from the King, and with my hopes. You will laugh at me, perhaps, my dear cousin, when you hear that at my time of life I am in good spirits, and calculate upon promises. Upon this subject, I could tell you that if I wished to be angry I need not go far in search of reasons; but I am determined to be pleased, as I have already told you: these feelings will contribute to my health and happiness. The friend whom you honour and revere so much, approves them highly; and, being in good health himself, pursues the road to heaven by a contrary direction to mine: for he is loaded with favours and prosperities. In truth, no one is more deserving of them.

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*LETTER 985

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

The Rocks, August 13, 1690.

I received a letter from you, my dear cousin, when you were setting out from Paris, which was a sort of adieu. Through your courage, great as it is, and the good humour which so soon dissipates melancholy, I thought I could perceive that, from not having obtained what you asked for at Court, there was a slight degree of mortification in the bottom of your heart. This was all that was necessary to give me a greater share than yourself; for I have not so much strength of mind as you. I think that in a conversation we should have made remarks which distance precludes.

I have just received letters from Paris, in which I am told that the Prince of Orange is not dead [1], and that it is only M. de Schomberg. We should have been much more pleased at this death, if we had not been led to expect the other; which however is only reserved for another time. The armies of Flanders are so near, that it seems as if they had still a desire to fight: those of Germany look at one another, with the Rhine between them. We must commend all to the God of battles, who will, when he pleases, be the God of peace. It is always by looking up to him that I consult the future, and endeavour to conform my desires to his will.

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[1] The death of the Prince of Orange had been believed for a week at Paris, and the most indecent rejoicings took place in consequence, from an inveterate hatred, mixed with fanaticism; but not with fear, as many foreign authors wrote, and particularly refugees. The French, at that time spoiled by success, could not suppose that they had anything to fear from a Prince they had almost invariably beaten.

*LETTER 986

From Madame DE LA FAYETTE *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, September 20, 1690.

You received my answer before I received your letter. You will see, by Madame de Lavardin's letter and by mine, that we wish you to go to Provence, since you are not coming to Paris: this is the best thing you can do; the sun is more brilliant, you will have company, I mean independent of Madame de Grignan, which is no trifling consideration; a large house; numerous servants; in short, it would be living to be there. I give great praise to your son for consenting to part with you for your own good: if I were in the humour for writing, I would compliment him upon it: set out as soon as you can; send us word what places you pass through, and at what time, nearly: you shall there find letters from us. I am tormented with vapours of the most painful and depressing kind; we must suffer, when it is the will of God.

I approve your journey to Provence with my whole heart; I tell you so without flattery, and the thought had even occurred to Madame de Lavardin and to me, without having the most distant idea that it was your intention [1].

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*LETTER 987

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the President* DE MOULCEAU.

Grignan, Friday, November 10, 1690.

Where do you think I am, Sir? Did you not know I was in Brittany? Our Corbinelli must have told you so. After having been there sixteen months with my son, I

[1] This is what Madame de Sévigné called "the approbation of her doctors."

thought it would be very pleasant to spend the winter here with my daughter. This plan of a journey of a hundred and fifty leagues, at first appeared a castle in the air; but affection rendered it so easy, that, in fact, I executed it between the third and twenty-fourth of October, on which day I arrived at Robinet's gate, where I was received by Madame de Grignan with open arms, and with so much joy, affection, and gratitude, that I thought I had not come soon enough, nor from a sufficiently great distance. After this, Sir, tell me that friendship is not a fine thing! it makes me often think of you, and wish to see you here once more during my life. We shall be here the whole of this winter, and the next summer: if you do not find a moment to come and see us, I shall think you have forgotten me. You will not know this house again, it is so much improved; but you will find its owners still abounding with esteem for you; and me, Sir, possessing a regard for you, capable of driving our *friend* to madness, and worthy of your paying us this visit.

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*LETTER 988

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Grignan, November 13, 1690.

When you see the date of this letter, my dear cousin, you will take me for a bird. I have passed courageously from Brittany into Provence. If my daughter had been at Paris, I should have gone there: but knowing she would spend the winter in this beautiful country, I resolved to come and spend it with her, enjoy her fine sunshine, and return with her to Paris next year. I thought, after having given sixteen months to my son, that it was right to devote a few to my daughter; and this plan, which appeared difficult to execute, was attended with very little trouble. I was three weeks upon the road, and upon the Rhône. I even took a few days of rest; and, at length, I was received

by M. de Grignan and my daughter with such cordial affection, such true joy and gratitude, that I thought I had not come far enough to see such excellent people; and found that the journey of a hundred and fifty leagues had not at all fatigued me. I will entertain you some day with an account of the grandeur of this house, and the beauty and magnificence of the furniture. I wished to inform you of my change of climate, that you might not write to me again at *The Rocks*, but here, where the mild heat of the sun makes me feel as if I should grow young again. We must not now neglect these little assistances, my dear cousin. I received your last letter before I left Brittany; but I was so overwhelmed with business, that I deferred answering it till I came here. We heard, the other day, of the death of M. de Seignelai [1]. How young! how rich! how well established! Nothing was wanting to his happiness: splendour itself seems dead in him. In short, my dear cousin, death makes us all equal; it is there the happy expect us. Death abates their joy, and thus comforts those who are not fortunate. A word of religion would not be amiss in this place; but I only wish to write a letter of friendship to my dear cousin, to ask how he does, and how his dear daughter is; to embrace them both with my whole heart; assure them of the esteem and respect of Madame de Grignan and her husband, who desire me to do so; and conjure them still to love me: it is not worth while to change after so many years.

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*LETTER 989

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to M.* DE COULANGES.

Lambesc, December 1, 1690.

Where are we, my amiable cousin? It is about a thousand years since I heard from you. I wrote to you last

[1] He died of languor and exhaustion, at the age of thirty-nine. The French marine, which he had created, perished after him. Louvois died the following year; but the evils he had occasioned survived him.

from *The Rocks,* by Madame de Chaulnes; since then, not a single word from you. We must begin a new score, now that I am in your neighbourhood. What say you to my courage? nothing can exceed it. After having been sixteen months in Brittany with my son, I thought I owed a visit also to my daughter, knowing she would not go to Paris this winter. I was so well received by her and M. de Grignan, that if I felt any fatigue, I have entirely forgotten it, and am alive only to the joy and pleasure of finding myself with them. This plan was not disapproved by Madame de Chaulnes, nor by Madame de Lavardin and Madame de La Fayette, whose advice I willingly ask, so that nothing has been wanting to the pleasure of this journey; you will give the finishing stroke to it, by returning by way of Grignan, where we shall expect you. The Assembly of our little States is at an end; we are here alone, waiting till M. de Grignan is able to go to Grignan, and afterwards, if he can, to Paris. He was seized four or five days ago very violently with the colic, and a continual fever, of which he had two attacks a day: this disorder was gaining ground rapidly, but was stopped by the usual miracle of the Jesuits' bark [1]; but forget not that it has been as good for the colic as the fever; he must therefore recover. We shall only go to Aix for a moment, to see the little nun, [2] and in a few days we shall be fixed for the winter at Grignan, where the little Colonel (the Marquis de Grignan), whose regiment is at Valence and the environs, will spend six weeks with us. Alas! this time will pass but too rapidly: I begin to sigh deeply at seeing it fly so swiftly, and I already perceive and feel the consequences. You, my young cousin, have not yet attained the period for making such melancholy reflections.

I wished to write to you on the death of M. de Seignelai: what an event! what a loss to his family and friends! I hear his widow is inconsolable, and that Sceaux is to be sold to the Duc du Maine. Oh, heavens! how much

[1] Quinine.

[2] Marie Blanche, her grand-daughter.

might be said on such a subject! But what say you to his property falling to a man [1] who was supposed already established? Another subject of conversation: but we must now give only the heads of the chapters preparatory to our meeting. The Duc de Chaulnes has written us some very obliging letters, and gives us the hope of seeing him soon at Grignan; but before this, it seems to me that it would not be impossible to send the bulls so long expected, and sung too soon: who would have thought that the Abbé de Polignac would not have brought them [2]? I never met with a child *so difficult to baptize*; but at length, you will have the honour of it: you deserve it after so much trouble; come then and receive our praise. I hardly dare mention your removal from Rue Parc-Royal, to the Temple; I am grieved for you and for myself; I hate the Temple, as much as I love the goddess (Madame de Coulanges) who at present demands homage there; I hate this part of the town, which leads only to Montfaucon; I even hate the beautiful view from it, of which Madame de Coulanges speaks; I hate this false country, which makes her insensible to the beauties of the true, and feel more exposed to the rigours of the cold at Brévannes, than at her bedside in this vile Temple. In short, the whole displeases me; and the best of it is, that I have told her all these dislikes with a rudeness which I cannot but feel, and cannot prevent. What will you do, my poor cousin, so far from the Chaulnes' Mansion, de Lamoignon, du Lude, de Villeroi, and de Grignan? how can you leave such a neighbourhood? For my own part, I almost renounce the goddess, for how can I reconcile this remote corner of the world with my Faubourg St.-Germain [3]? Instead of finding this charming Madame de Coulanges under my hand, as I used to do, taking coffee with her in the morning, running to her

[1] M. de Pontchartrain, afterwards Chancellor of France in 1699.

[2] Everybody was deceived in this; upon which Madame de Cornuel said: "He does not bring *bulles* (bulls) but *préambules* (preambles)." They were in reality only preliminary articles.

[3] On account of Madame de La Fayette, whom she often visited there.

house after mass, and returning there in the evening, as if it were to my own—in short, my poor cousin, name it not to me: I am happy in having a few months to accustom myself to this strange alteration; but was there no other house to be found? and your sanctum, what is become of that? shall we find all our portraits there? In short, it must have been the will of God, for how, without this idea, is it possible for me to be silent on the subject? I must put an end to it, and also to my letter.

I found Pauline a delightful girl, and exactly as you had described her to me. Tell me all your news; I write largely to you, for we like this style, which is that of friendship. I send you this letter by M. de Montmort, Controller at Marseilles, formerly M. du Fargis, who ate tartlets with my children: if you are acquainted with him, you must know him to be one of the best men in the world, the most polite, and the most obliging, loving to please and to circulate pleasure, in a manner peculiarly his own; in short, he knows more than any one upon this subject: I will make you subscribe to this, my dear cousin, at Grignan, where I shall expect you with true friendship and real impatience.

LETTER 990

From Madame DE GRIGNAN *to M.* DE COULANGES.

Grignan, December 17, 1690.

Yes, we are together, loving and embracing each other with all our hearts; I, on my side, delighted to see my mother come heroically from one extremity of the universe to the other, and from the west to the east: no one but herself was capable of such an undertaking to be near her child, *like Niquée to see her lover.* And so you approved her journey, my dear cousin? I thank you for it, and as a reward, I approve of your return. You write me word that you have a hope of obtaining your congé, and

the Duc de Chaulnes informs me that you are sure of it: empty hands have no charms, and I heartily wish he could bring back bulls in his; it seems to me to be as much your business as the Duc's. The part you have taken in it by your celebrated song, engages you to come off honourably in this affair. Do not trouble yourself to bring a dog to Pauline: we do not choose to love any but rational creatures here; and from the sect [1] to which we belong, we do not choose to embarrass ourselves with this sort of machines, unless we could wind them up to cleanliness; without that, they are unbearable: you will be very well received, without the necessity of making presents to gain the heart of your future wife; it is very faithful to you, and nothing will prevent you from concluding the marriage, but the absence of the father, who is meditating a speedy departure, and who would have gone six weeks ago, but for a very serious indisposition. But, my dear cousin, do you sufficiently consider, that at your return you will no longer be near the Chaulnes' Mansion, that your portraits will be displaced, and that you will never be able to restore them to their former perfect order? I have really been grieved at the inconstancy of Madame de Coulanges; you comfort me, however, by the prospect that she will procure you delightful society in the Temple: but, after all, neither Cardinal de Bouillon, nor Messieurs de Vendôme, are of much use in this large house, which is more calculated for their horses than for themselves: we must find our consolation then in the short time you will remain there, and consider that after thirty-five years [2] you will return to Rome; you will still be young at the end of that period, if you go on as you do at present. I am very impatient to see all your poetry on Rome: bring me, if you can, the verses of the Duc de Nevers; they are so sublime and so singular, that we cannot help blaming the care he takes to conceal them so cruelly. What! you are admitted into the

[1] Madame de Grignan was a Cartesian.

[2] Madame de Coulanges had entered into a lease for thirty-five years.

sacred mysteries of this solitary abode! I admire you for having dared to attack the caprice of the husband, and the delicacy of the wife: I knew she was adorable, but not that she was so for you, nor that the praises you bestowed on her would convince her. This delightful society was necessary to you, to supply the place of that you have lost, in the Prince de Turenne, and Cardinal de Bouillon. A report prevails that the latter is not so happy at Paris as at Rome; his nephew and he were however well received. Were you not grieved for M. de Seignelai? Many fine reflections might be made upon his tragical fate: his sanctum, my dear cousin, is in greater disorder than yours. How much Madame de Seignelai is to be pitied, and how many things she has lost to which she was attached, and from which she never supposed she could be separated! She is therefore, as we are informed, inconsolable. You cannot tell me by a letter, all you have thought upon this subject; the public says enough of it. Accept my compliments upon what I have just heard, that your nephew (the Comte de Sanzei) is appointed a Captain of dragoons: I take a real interest in it; it is the way to be Colonel; and when he has attained to this rank, he will be more at his ease. Adieu, my dear cousin, till we meet. I am making my rooms as warm as I can; but coming from Rome, everything will appear ice to you; even our conversation, if you have enjoyed that of M. and Madame de Nevers in ever so slight a degree. I am very much yours, and I embrace you. Everyone here says to you, *ora pro nobis* [1]. My mother writes to you.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *also writes to M.* DE COULANGES.

(Enclosed in her Daughter's letter to him.)

It is impossible to glean after my daughter; she has, in reality, said everything that is to be said, and much better than I could have done. I can only say to you, that

[1] Allusion to what M. de Coulanges called his *litanies,* which was the enumeration he made in his letters of all the persons who were at Grignan.

we are together, and that we shall receive you together; that I am delighted at having taken this journey, and that you, like the rest of the wise heads, approve it; that the manner in which I was received, and in which I am beloved, would have deserved that I should have come from a still greater distance. I told you all this, not ten days ago; I wrote also to our Governor; I protested to him that he was the occasion of my journey, by his leaving Brittany, and giving me the wish of coming to meet him, and of having this advantage over Madame de Chaulnes, so that it was impossible for me to resist it. I told you also how much I detest your out-of-the-way, remote, ill-placed Temple; the goddess will sing in vain, *Come, all, to my temple*: I shall not go often, though I shall constantly wish to do so. In short, my interest respecting this distant abode makes me so unjust, that I hate even the beautiful view from it, and the open country, that tells all secrets, and divulges all the charms of spring, as well as all the horrors of winter; you would not make me like this sham country in a thousand years, and I had almost as lief retire before the end of the term to my estate at the *Visitation*[1], as to live there thirty-five years. I have therefore only to tell you, my dear friend, that I have not received the letter you mention, in which Cardinal de Bouillon and the Abbé de Polignac had both written; I regret it extremely; I should at least have answered it immediately. I rejoice that Sanzei is made a Captain; he will make his fortune; I hope so, and that you will always love me. I am never surprised at your being beloved, but I wonder at your good fortune in gaining the affection of M. and Madame de Nevers; nothing can be better; everyone in his way.

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[1] The place where she intended to be buried, if she died at Paris.

*LETTER 991

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to M.* DE COULANGES.

Grignan, April 10, 1691.

We have received a letter dated the thirty-first of March, from our dear Ambassador: it came in less than a week: this expedition is delightful, but what he tells us is still more so; it is impossible to write in better spirits. My daughter takes upon herself to answer him, and as I desire her to send the Holy Ghost with all diligence, not only to create a Pope [1], but to put a speedy termination to business, that he may be able to pay us a visit. She assures me, that she will send him word of the conquest of Nice, in five days after opening the trenches, by M. de Catinat, and that this intelligence will produce the same effect for our bulls. Tell us, my dear cousin, if we judge rightly. We have received M. de Nevers's epistle to the little Le Clerc of the Academy: it is accompanied by one of your letters; they always give us great pleasure: the packet came very slowly, we know not why: there is neither rhyme nor reason in the conduct of the post. We think the epistle of M. de Nevers very pretty, and very entertaining; in short, all his productions have so peculiar and so excellent a character, that after them we can relish no others. The two last verses of the song he made for you, charmed my daughter as a Cartesian; speaking of the fine wines of Italy, he says:

> Sur la membrane de leur sens
> Font des sillons charmans [2].

In short, it all deserves praise; for instance, can anything be more humorous, in his epistle, than the smallest human

[1] Alexander VIII. had been dead for two months and a few days. Before he died, he distributed among his nephews all the money he possessed; which made Pasquin say, that it would have been better for the church to have been his niece than his daughter.

[2] They make charming furrows upon the membrane of the senses. [Translation.]

string wound up to the highest pitch; and the other extreme, of a hundred crotchets rolling in bass to the very depth of the abyss? This picture is complete; and the opera of which he speaks, is deservedly ridiculed: but we cannot comprehend why he has given his son's name to this epistle: *cui bono*? and where is the wit of it? for the style resembles his own, as much as one drop of water resembles another; it would be impossible to be deceived, and the subject can give offence to none: if you do not explain this to us, we shall be ill.

But let us talk of your grief at having lost this delightful family [1], which has so well celebrated your merit in verse and prose, while you at the same time were so much alive to the charms of its society. It is easy to conceive the painfulness of this separation; M. de Chaulnes will not suffer us to believe that he shares it with you: an Ambassador must be occupied only with the business of the King his master, who on his side has taken Mons [2], with a hundred thousand men, in a manner truly heroic, going everywhere, visiting every place, and indeed exposing himself too much. The policy of the Prince of Orange, who was taking his measures very quietly with the confederate Princes for the beginning of May, has found itself a little disconcerted by this promptitude: he threatens to come to the assistance of this great place; a prisoner told this to the King, who replied coolly, "We came here to wait for him." I defy your imagination to frame a more perfect

[1] M. and Madame de Nevers.

[2] The town of Mons surrendered to the King on the 10th of April, the day on which this letter is dated, after a siege of eighteen days. To Boileau is attributed the following impromptu, addressed to a lady who required him to write some verses upon the occasion:

Mons étoit, disoit-on, pucelle
Qu'un roi gardoit avec grand soin;
Louis-le-Grand en eut besoin,
Mons se rendit: vous auriez fait comme elle.

Mons was a virgin, it is said,
Kept by a king with greatest care;
Louis the Great wish'd for the maid,
Mons yielded: so would you, my fair. [Translation.]

and more precise answer. I therefore suppose, my dear cousin, that by sending you the news of this other conquest, in four days, your Rome will not be sorry to live paternally with her elder son. God knows whether our Ambassador will ably support *the identity of the greatest King in the world,* as M. de Nevers said.

Let us return to our own country. Our little Marquis de Grignan went to the siege of Nice like an adventurer, *vago di fama* (eager for fame). M. de Catinat gave him the command of the cavalry for several days, that he might not be a volunteer; this did not prevent him from going everywhere, from exposing himself to the fire, which was at first very brisk, or from bearing fascines, for this is the fashion: but what sort of fascines, my dear cousin? all from orange-trees, laurels, and pomegranates! they feared nothing but too great a profusion of perfumes. Never was there so beautiful or so delightful a country seen: you can conceive what it must be, from your knowledge of Italy. This is the country M. de Savoie has taken pleasure in losing and destroying: can we call this good policy? We expect the little Colonel (the Marquis de Grignan), who is preparing to set out for Piémont: for this expedition to Nice is only *throwing the bait in expectation of the game*; he will not be here when you pass; but do you know who will find you here? my son, who is coming to spend the summer with us, and to meet his Governor, by following the footsteps of his mother.

By the bye, speaking of mother and son, do you know, my dear cousin, that I have been for these ten days or more in a sorrow of heart, from which you alone have had the power of relieving me, while I have been employed in writing to you. This has been occasioned by the illness of the Dowager Madame de Lavardin, my most intimate and oldest friend: this woman, of such excellent and sound understanding; this illustrious widow, who gathered us all under her wing; this person of such exalted merit, has fallen suddenly into a sort of apoplexy; she is drowsy, paralytic, and feverish: when she is roused, she talks ra-

tionally, but she soon relapses: in short, my child, my friendship could not sustain a greater loss; I should feel it keenly. The Duchesse de Chaulnes writes to me respecting her, and is very much grieved at her illness; Madame de La Fayette still more so: indeed, her merit is so well known, that everyone is interested as in a public loss: judge then what her friends must feel. I am informed, that M. de Lavardin is very much affected; I hope it is true; it is an honour to him, to grieve for a mother to whom he is in a manner indebted for whatever he is. Adieu, my dear cousin; my heart is full, I can write no more: if I had begun with this melancholy subject, I should not have had the courage to chat with you as I have done.

I shall say no more respecting the Temple, I have given my opinion of it already; but I shall never like or approve it. Not so with regard to you; for I love you, and shall love and approve you always.

Madame DE GRIGNAN *adds a Postscript to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ'S *letter to M.* DE COULANGES.

The dearest friends must part; M. and Madame de Nevers have deserted you. Alas! my dear cousin, how I pity you! I remember, however, that they were your consolation under the loss you sustained in Cardinal de Bouillon, and the Abbé de Polignac: as you have recovered these friends, may they not in turn console you for M. and Madame de Nevers? For my own part, I believe they will not fail, as soon as the Conclave is over; for, till then, the intercourse that is wished to be established with the Holy Ghost, will be a little interrupted by yours. My mother has said all that is necessary on the verses of M. de Nevers: some of the pictures and expressions are proofs of a most humorous imagination: I should like to enliven mine with a collection of his works. But what say you to finding such excellent morsels of Brittany at Grignan? my mother and my brother, whom M. de Chaulnes left at *The Rocks,* and whom he will meet here! They are delighted

at the idea of doing him the honours of the place: you may judge what their company will be to me; I flatter myself they will be the means of keeping you here, and that, finding so many relations in your way, you will not be able to proceed farther. I assure you, I wish it sincerely, and, without pretending to supply to you the place of Madame de Nevers, I wish to do my best to amuse you, to show you how much you are beloved, and in what estimation you are held in this house. Adieu, my dearest cousin; your mistress[1] expects you with a true lover-like impatience.

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*LETTER 992

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to M.* DE COULANGES.

Grignan, May 15, 1691.

I perceived distinctly that, since I came here, I was something more to you than usual: I knew not precisely why it was so, but you have now told me; it is because I am your neighbour, my dear cousin. I delight in this new alliance; I had felt it strongly, and placed it in the list of the agreeable reasons that had induced me to come here; but I had not the wit to give it a name. You are my neighbour then, so long as you remain at Rome; for if ever we meet in Paris, particularly at the Temple, we shall be only cousins. You see I have received all your letters, sometimes slowly, sometimes speedily, without my being able to account for it. My daughter thinks you have not received four impromptu verses, which she wrote in the joy of her heart, at having gained her law-suit against the *lazy* fury of Madame de Buri; for you have not mentioned them. I have seen the little leaf, which always shows the profound wisdom of the Duchesse de Chaulnes; I am not surprised at it.

We are glad to have du Charmel's answer to M. de Nevers; it is good substantial prose, and seems to come

[1] Mademoiselle Pauline de Grignan, afterwards Marquise de Simiane.

from a man who is satisfied with his situation. The religious lines of the Abbé Têtu are also excellent, and those from the pen of a true penitent. For my part, I am not sorry to see a person revel in the joy of a good conscience: when, like M. du Charmel, we have received favours from God in abundance, and are penetrated with gratitude for the distinction, I like they should be avowed, and that due honour should be paid to the bounty of him to whom we owe them. This may be shown in another way; but that is not the one which presents itself to me: I therefore like the artless manner in which he paints the composure and tranquillity of his soul. By dint of lending the beautiful verses of M. de Nevers, which occasioned this answer, I have lost them: so that I beg you, my dear cousin, to bring them to me again when you have made a Pope. I highly approve your having asked leave of absence at this time; for if you were to delay it a moment, the new Pope might die also, and, as you say, you would still have to begin again. But is it not necessary that you should bring these bulls? Come, however, in what way you please; you will always be welcome.

I have already told you that we expect my son; he is to set out on the eighteenth or twentieth of this month. We are grieved at the length of your Conclave; it prevents you from seeing and hearing Cardinal Le Camus, and from talking to me about him. He is a man of whom I have formed the highest opinion, and whom it will give me the greatest pleasure to see: I shall at least have all you catch from him. I believe my daughter is writing to her unfortunate Princesse [1]: I can easily conceive the ruin of her former face; it would not have been so bad, if she had not placed herself in such a wretched situation, and if, instead of being tormented by all these Spaniards, she had put herself under the protection of a King of France who is everywhere victorious, beloved of heaven; who confounds and disperses, in the most delightful manner possible, all those great politicians, assembled round the false

[1] The Princesse de Vaudemont.

King of England at *The Hague.* It was to sap and destroy his mighty power, that they had collected together; and the result was, that they were on the spot to witness the conquest of the beautiful and important town of Mons. I assure you, my dear cousin, that if M. and Madame de Vaudemont had not attached themselves to all these persons, they would have done a thousand times better, and the Princesse would not have been so thin. We, who every day sing *Te Deum,* who have taken Nice and all this fine coast, are quite well: we sing M. de Nevers' Italian song; our band is in possession of it, and we will treat you with it when you come. I intend that you shall give me all your songs, as you have given several to Madame de ****; for they are now all scattered in your letters, like the leaves of the Sibyl: we always admire them highly, and you are still further improved by your intercourse with M. de Nevers. No one knows better than we do, the charms and beauty of his house at Frênes: that only was wanting to your happiness; you will find resources from different walks and new pleasures.

Madame DE GRIGNAN *adds a Postscript to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ'S *letter to M.* DE COULANGES.

You have only to imagine, my dearest, that I say the same things to you that my mother does, and you will find that I write very well; for a repetition would not be very delightful after the way in which she has treated the different subjects. I must, however, say two words to you on that of my Princesse. What! has she no longer that pretty face, the portrait of which I have so carefully preserved? It is pity, indeed, that it should have disappeared. This is the noble performance of the Spaniards, to torture people till they are no longer recognisable. I place the restraint in which you inform me this poor woman lives at Rome, in the list of the cruelties of the Inquisition. She has desired me, in writing to me by you, to answer her letter at Brussels: this correspondence is a little like that we should have at Quebec; but though it may not be a very

frequent, I assure you it is a very affectionate one on my part; and that I cannot help entering deeply into the sorrows of this amiable woman. But I have interrupted my mother.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *continues and concludes her letter to M.* DE COULANGES.

I conclude my letter, by embracing you on both sides with the fervent affection you know me to entertain for you. I salute Cardinal de Bouillon with infinite respect; I am Cardinal de Janson's very humble servant. I say to the Abbé de Polignac what you know I think of him. You will distribute my compliments to the rest as you think proper.

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*LETTER 993

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to M. le Duc* DE CHAULNES.

Grignan, May 15, 1691.

Good heavens, my dear Governor, what a personage you are! it will be impossible now to live with you; your steps are so grand, that we shall be thrown into the greatest embarrassments. What trouble did you not give the other day to the poor Spanish Ambassador! Do you think it can be a very pleasant thing to put back for the whole length of a street? And what a bustle have you not created with the Emperor's Ambassador, on the franchises! The poor myrmidon who is so severely lashed, is an excellent proof of it; in short, you are become so punctilious, that all Europe will think twice, before it will know how to comport itself with Your Excellency. If you bring this humour to us, we shall no longer recognise you.—Let us now talk of the greatest affair at Court. Your imagination leads straight to new enterprises; you suppose that the King, not content with Mons and Nice, wished to besiege Namur also: not at all; there is a circumstance which

has given His Majesty more pain, and has cost him more time, than his late conquests; this is the total defeat of the top-knots: no more head-dresses aspiring to the clouds, no more *helmets,* no more *points,* no more *burganets,* no more *jardinières*: the Princesses have appeared with heads reduced at least full three-quarters in height; they make use of their own hair, as they did ten years ago. I can give you no idea of the noise and confusion this change has occasioned at Versailles. Everyone reasoned profoundly upon this business, and it was a business that engrossed the attention of everyone. We have been assured that M. de Langlée has written a treatise upon this change, to send into the country; as soon as we receive it, Sir, we will not fail to send it you; and, in the meantime, I very humbly kiss the hands of Your Excellency.

You will have the goodness to excuse it, if what I here add is not written in so firm a hand as the above: my letter was sealed, and I open it to say that we have just left the table, where we have drunk your health in the most excellent and most refreshing white wine that was ever tasted, with three Bretons of your acquaintance, Messieurs du Cambout, de Trévigni, and du Guesclin; Madame de Grignan began, the rest followed. Brittany has done its duty: "To the health of the Ambassador; to the health of the Duchesse de Chaulnes, agreed; to our dear Governor, agreed; to our Governor's Lady: Sir, I pass the toast to you; Madame, I receive it." In short, so much has been done, that we have even given the toast to M. de Coulanges; it is for him to answer.

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*LETTER 994

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to M.* DE COULANGES.

Grignan, June 23, 1691.

Alas, my dear Coulanges! and so you have the gout in your foot, in your elbow, in your knee; and the pain will

not have far to go, before it will seize upon your whole person: ah! you cry out! you complain! you no longer sleep! you no longer eat! you no longer drink! you no longer sing! you no longer laugh! Ah! mirth and you are no longer the same! this idea brings tears into my eyes; but, while I weep, you are perhaps cured: I hope so, and wish so. The charming couplets you sent to Madame de Nevers, notwithstanding your gout, cannot certainly be the last you have written: they highly deserve to be followed by others. You must have received our letters of the fifteenth of May, which will have proved to you, that at last, at last, we have received all yours; this is also an answer to two, for we owe you an acknowledgment of those of May twentieth, and June twelfth. This then settles our account; I should be very sorry to have lost any one of your letters; besides their own value, which you know I do not consider trifling, they have almost always been accompanied by the works of M. de Nevers, of which I have made a little collection that I would not part with for a great deal of money. I know not why you do not receive our letters, and still less why you do not make a Pope; on observing how you set about it at first, I thought nothing in the world so easy; but we see, on the contrary, that nothing is so difficult; I believe the Holy Ghost must take the affair in hand, after all: oh! hasten then to pray to him on the subject, for we long to see you. M. de Chaulnes informs my daughter, that the thing that is least thought of in the Conclave, is the making a Pope, and that by this he tells her all the secret; his whole letter is extremely amusing. My son has so great a desire to obey this Duc, that, had it not been for my daughter, I think he would have perished in the undertaking; not for the sake of going to Rome, but to see so illustrious an Ambassador, and you also, my dear cousin; but Madame de Grignan decided imperatively, as mistress of the house, and as a Provençale, who is better acquainted than we are with the power of the sun in Italy at this season. Return then to see us, my dear neighbour; come and embrace us. I consent to all

Madame de Coulanges is doing for her Temple; she will not often have our incense, but she will perhaps set the higher value upon it. You say, that while you are not with your young mistress, if she found another husband, you think she would accept him. Tell the Ambassador to read you the account I sent him of the delightful trip our Duchesse has taken to Marly. Make all my compliments for me; you know better than I do, to whom they ought to be given.

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*LETTER 995

From Madame de SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Grignan, July 12, 1691.

I have been at Grignan these eight months, my dear cousin. I informed you of the courage I possessed in coming here all the way from Brittany: I have not repented my journey. My daughter is amiable, you well know, and she loves me dearly. M. de Grignan has every quality to render society pleasing. Their house is very beautiful, and very magnificent: it has a noble appearance: they live extremely well, and see a great deal of company. The only sorrow we have had during the winter, was to see the master of the house ill of a fever, from which the quinine had great difficulty to extricate him, notwithstanding its powers. At length he is well. He has taken a journey to Aix, where they were delighted to see him again. On the other hand, my son is also come from Brittany to drink the waters of this country, where the good society, to which he very much adds by his presence, contributes more to his restoration than any other remedy. We are all here therefore together. There is a young Grignan whom you do not know, who supports her station well [1]. She is sixteen years of age, is very pretty, and has a good understanding; we do not fail to improve it. All this goes on well, and indeed too well; for I find that the days, and the

[1] Pauline.

months, and the years, pass so swiftly, that I can no longer retain them. Time, in its flight, hurries me away, in spite of myself; in vain I endeavour to stop him, he drags me along: the thought of this alarms me. The little Grignan has spent the winter with us; he has had a fever this spring; it is only within a fortnight that he has rejoined his regiment, which happily was not at Coni [1]. He cannot therefore be accused of having fled.

The knowledge of when we are to set out for Paris, is still in the secrets of Providence. It is impossible to speak to you more freely of the great *I*, as M. Nicole says, than I have just done: but it is what you wish. Let us return to you, my good cousin. You have been, I believe, to your Assembly of States; I delayed writing to you till they were over. I know not what you are doing. You intend to go and pay your court at Fontainebleau; you will do well. You will be fortunate in pleasing His Majesty, effect it in whatever way you will. Adieu, my dear cousin. I ask pardon of your wit for this dull letter; but such letters must sometimes be written.

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*LETTER 996

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to M.* DE COULANGES.

Grignan, July 24, 1691.

"Short reckonings make long friends:" I have received all your letters, my dear neighbour; that of May twentieth, that of June fourth, about which you were uneasy, and the last of July fourth; with the epistle M. de Nevers sent you from Genoa, and, in short, all the works of this Duc, who is the true son of Apollo and the Muses. You ask me if I do not treasure all his productions: in-

[1] M. de Bulonde, who had the management of the siege of Coni, deceived by false advices, abandoned it precipitately, and retreated in great disorder. The excessive grief betrayed by Louvois, seems to give the lie to those who pretended that Bulonde had only obeyed his orders, and seconded his plan for the prolongation of the war. This General was sent to the Bastille.

deed I do; I have not lost a single one; they have highly amused us, as well as everyone who has passed this way whom we have deemed worthy of them. The last epistle is rather above Pauline's capacity; but we have had the pleasure of finding ourselves capable of explaining to her what she did not understand. With respect to the description of the dinner, it is suited to the taste of the best guests; and it made M. de Grignan's, the Chevalier de St.-André's my son's, and all our mouths water: I never saw so excellent a repast; I have just placed it among the other wonders of this Duc. To conclude the article of letters: when you have received that of the twenty-fifth of June, and this, you will have received all.

Let us now come to yours, the beginning of which had nearly brought me to tears. How can I fancy you confined to your bed, afflicted in every limb and every joint of your poor little body; and your nerves so affected, that you can neither stir hand nor foot? This is enough to drive us to despair; but to see that all this produces a song upon your melancholy situation, accompanied by another, the most humorous in the world, on a thing which you see daily; you may suppose, my poor cousin, this is a real comfort to our hearts, as it proves that the vital principle is not attacked. This fit of the gout has only given you the blue devils, and made you look forward to futurity under the most melancholy aspect in which it can present itself to you; but this situation, so violent, and so contrary to your disposition, has not had leisure to make any impression on you.

In spite of St. Peter, which is past, and of the predictions of the physicians, a Pope is made, and the Cardinals will leave the Conclave without the event having cost them their lives; on the contrary, they will recover their health, and their liberty. It is not the first time that gentlemen of the faculty have erred in judgment. The Duc de Chaulnes has written us a letter by the courier, dated the fifteenth, which brings the news of the exaltation: he thinks of nothing now but of coming to see us; he will be with us

a fortnight; and though the Pope[1] be a Neapolitan, he maintains that the affair of the bulls is so well disposed of, that it will be the signal-gun for saddling horses, and setting out for Grignan; this hope gives us great pleasure, and very much abridges the share I wished to take in all your melancholy calendars: it is at an end, however, my dear cousin; you are cured, you are set out, you are on the point of arriving here. I embrace you a thousand times. Let us talk a little of the table in the Ambassador's sanctum, of the chaos of letters, of the deep abyss of bags, of the confusion of papers, from which, like the infernal regions, when once a poor letter is thrown into it, it never comes out again. It was a miracle indeed that mine was found; but it was my daughter's letter, in which I had written: she had a great inclination to be offended at being thus lost and confounded with the rest; but I appeased her in the best way I could, by assuring her that the Ambassador read what she wrote to him, with the deepest attention, and that it was upon my lines he had not condescended to throw a single glance: and it is the fact; for he said I had not written to him. She replied, "But as it was my letter, why consign it to this chaos?" To this I knew not what to answer; the Ambassador will think of it, if he pleases. It is true, that my poor letters have only the value you give to them, by reading them as you do; for they have their tones, and are unbearable when they are brayed out, or spelled word by word: be this as it may, my dear cousin, you give them a thousand times more honour than they deserve.

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[1] Cardinal Antioche Pignatelli was elected Pope on the 12th of July, 1691, and took the name of Innocent XII.

*LETTER 997

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to M.* DE COULANGES.

Grignan, July 26, 1691.

I am so astonished at the news of the sudden death of M. de Louvois [1], that I know not how or where to begin the subject to you. This great Minister then, this man of consequence, who held so exalted a situation, whose *le moi* (*I*), as M. Nicole says, was so extensive; who was the centre of so many things, is dead: how many affairs, designs, projects, secrets, interests to unravel, wars begun, intrigues, and noble moves at chess, had he not to make and to conduct! "O God, grant me a little time; I want to give check to the Duc de Savoie, check-mate to the Prince of Orange:" no, no, not a moment, a single moment. Can we reason upon this strange event? indeed we

[1] The death of Louvois, as it is well known, has been the object of many discussions. It has been said that he was poisoned. Saint-Simon affirms it; and his account charges the King with this crime. Voltaire says, with reason, that this is repugnant to every idea that has been formed of the character of Louis XIV. Of those who felt like him, some said that it was a revenge of the Duc de Savoie's; others, that Louvois poisoned himself. The last opinion deserves to be inquired into. It is agreed on all sides, that he was on the eve of disgrace, that he expected harsh treatment, that he spoke of death as preferable to this fall, and that he was a violent and passionate man, whom no scruple restrained. Under all these circumstances, there is nothing very improbable in his suicide. But it appears that this fact was never cleared up; and it is an inconvenience to which we are easily resigned. It is certain, however, that the King made no concealment that the event of his death happened very opportunely to draw him out of difficulties; it is also certain, that the death of this man, who had done so much harm, was a great loss. The epitaph of Louvois, which appeared at that time, gave a good idea of the public opinion respecting him:

Ici gît, sous qui tout plioit,
Et qui de tout avoit connoissance parfaite;
Louvois que personne n'aimoit,
Et que tout le monde regrette.

Here lies one to whom all yielded,
And who knew of all the bent;
Louvois, who sense with power wielded,
Whom no one loved, and all lament. [Translation.]

cannot; it is in our sanctum we must reflect upon it. This is the second Minister [1] you have seen expire since you have been at Rome: nothing is more different than the manner of their death; but nothing more similar than their fortune, and the hundred thousand chains which attached them both to the world.

With regard to the great objects which ought to lead you to God, you say you find your religious sentiments shaken by what is passing at Rome and in the Conclave. My poor cousin, you are deceived; I have heard that a man of very excellent understanding drew a quite contrary inference from what he saw in this great city; he concluded that the Christian religion must necessarily be all holy and all miraculous, to subsist thus, of itself, in the midst of so many disorders and so much profanation [2]. Do then as he did, draw the same inferences, and believe that this very city was formerly washed with the blood of an infinite number of martyrs; that in the first centuries, all the intrigues of the Conclave ended in choosing from among the priests him who appeared to have the greatest zeal and strength to endure martyrdom; that there were thirty-seven Popes who suffered, one after the other; and that the certainty of their fate had no influence over them to make them fly from, or refuse, a position to which death was attached, and a death of the most horrible nature. You have only to read this history, to be convinced that a religion, subsisting by a continual miracle, both in its establishment and its duration, cannot be an invention of men. Men do not think thus: read St. Augustin in his *Vérité de la Religion* (Truth of Religion) ; read *Abbadie* [3], very different indeed from that great saint, but not unworthy of being compared with him when he speaks of the Christian religion: ask the Abbé de Polignac what he thinks of this

[1] With M. de Seignelai.

[2] See the *Second Story* of the *First Day* in "THE DECAMERON" of Boccaccio, which evidently, Madame de Sévigné had either read or been told.

[3] Author of a book on *The Truth of the Christian Religion.* He was a Protestant.

book. Collect all these ideas, and do not judge so hastily: believe that whatever intrigues may take place in the Conclave, it is the Holy Ghost that always makes the Pope. God works all, he is the sovereign of all, and this is what we ought to think: I have read this sentiment in a good book: "What evil can happen to a man who knows that God does all things, and who loves whatever God does?" And with this, my dear cousin, I take my leave.

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*LETTER 998

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to M.* DE COULANGES.

Grignan, August 14, 1691.

Come hither, that I may embrace you, caress you, and tell you that my daughter, whose approbation you so highly value, is delighted with your two little couplets on the Holy Father. Nothing, in my opinion, could be better imagined, nor better executed: we have all been in raptures. But, my dear cousin, the Duc de Chaulnes, in his letter of July twentieth, says not a word respecting M. de Louvois [1]; his death seems to me to demand an exclamation or two. His hopes are very sanguine as to the new Pope, though not the work of his hands; all our interest is, that he will give us our bulls, and that you will come and pay us a visit; that day seems to me to be at our finger's end, so swiftly does time pass. You will find my son at Marseilles, who will be there to meet you; this is an attention he owes to our Governor, by way of amends for not having gone to Rome.

I long to know what you thought of the return of M. de Pomponne to the Ministry: it was to us a subject of real joy: M. and Madame de Grignan had no doubt of this event, from a truly prophetic spirit; but I wished it too much even to listen to them; and when Madame de Vins sent the news to my daughter, I was so surprised and so

[1] M. de Louvois died on the 16th July, and it is not surprising that the news of this event should not have reached M. de Chaulnes on the 20th.

transported, that I knew not what I heard: at length I comprehended that it was a very agreeable truth, not only to me but to the rest of the world, for you cannot form an idea how generally his return is approved. I have paid my compliments to Madame de Chaulnes and our Ambassador, on the choice of M. de Beauvilliers; this is another strange man with whom the King augments his Council; which is now perfect, like everything His Majesty does: he is the cleverest man in his kingdom, he is never idle, and provides for everything; nothing remains but to pray to God, that he may be preserved to us. The Dauphin enters into all the Councils; do you not also approve this? it is truly associating him with the Empire: we have subjects for admiration everywhere. If your good Pope would make peace, it would be an act worthy of himself, and would place us in a situation to praise, with a more tranquil mind, all the wonders we see. Adieu, my dear cousin, you know how I am disposed toward you. M. de Barillon and M. de Jeannin are dead; we shall die too.

[*N.B. Here end the Letters from Madame de Sévigné and Madame de Grignan, to the Duc de Chaulnes and M. de Coulanges, during the stay which these two made at Rome.*]

*LETTER 999

From Madame DE LA FAYETTE *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, September 19, 1691.

My health is a little better than it has been; that is, I am not so much afflicted with the vapours; I have no other disorder. Be not uneasy respecting my health, my complaints are not dangerous; and though they should become so, it would be only from great languor and natural decay, which is not the business of an hour: be easy, therefore, with regard to the life of your poor friend: you will have time to be prepared for whatever may happen, un-

less from some unforeseen accident, to which all mortals are liable, and I more than any other, because I am more mortal than any other; a person in health is a miracle to me. The Chevalier de Grignan is my nurse; I am truly grateful to him, and I love him with all my heart. The Duchesse de Chaulnes came to see me yesterday; my situation excited her pity. My daughter-in-law had a miscarriage a week after her delivery; this happens to many women; it is being very near having two children; her daughter is well: they will have children enough. Our poor friend Croisilles [1] is still at Saint-Gratien; he sends me word that his health is very good in the country; you should see how he is, to wonder that he can boast of health: the Chevalier de Grignan and I are really uneasy about him. The Abbé Têtu has taken a journey into the country; Madame de Chaulnes and I suspect that he is gone to La Trappe. The good Madame Lavocat is very ill: but she has been in the world a very long time. I am wholly yours, my dear friend, and no less devoted to your amiable and excellent party.

I have just been informed that M. de La Feuillade [2] died last night; if this be true, it is a noble example to us to beware how we torment ourselves with the concerns of life.

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[1] Brother of Maréchal de Catinat.

[2] François d'Aubusson, Duc de La Feuillade, Peer and Maréchal of France, Governor of Dauphiné, and father of the last Maréchal of that name.

Choisy relates, that a few years afterwards, Louis XIV. suffered the avowal to escape him, that in one year he had been rid of three men whom he could no longer endure, Seignelai, Louvois, and La Feuillade. Voltaire objects, that Seignelai did not die in the same year as the other two. But the truth is, that they died all three in less than eleven months, and Seignelai on the third of November, 1690. In the sequel the King might very well take this for one year; and there is not sufficient ground for denying an anecdote which Choisy relates as certain, and connected with other circumstances which confirm it.

*LETTER 1000

From Madame DE LA FAYETTE *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, September 26, 1691.

Come to Paris for my sake, my dear friend? the very thought alarms me. God forbid that I should thus interfere with your plans; and, though I ardently long for the pleasure of seeing you, I should purchase this pleasure too dear, if it were at your expense. I informed you, a week ago, of the true state of my health; I was then perfectly well; and I have been, as by a miracle, a whole fortnight without the vapours, which is to say in other words, free from all disorders. I have not been so well for these three or four days past; but it is the sight alone of a sealed letter, which I have not opened, that has brought upon me a return of my complaint. I am as much like a woman under the power of enchantment, as two drops of water are like each other; but after dinner the spell is removed: I wrote to you a month or two since, that this was my evil hour, and at present it is my good one. I hope that my disorder, having turned and changed about, will leave me; but I shall always remain a very weak being, and you cannot imagine how much I am surprised at being so: I was not brought up with the idea that this could ever be the case with me. I return to your journey, my dear; be assured that the pleasure I experience from the thought of seeing you, is a castle in the air to me; but my pleasure would be disturbed, if your journey did not accord with the affairs of Madame de Grignan, and with your own. It seems to me, however, setting all considerations of interest aside, that you would both do well to come; but I cannot express to you how much I have been affected at the idea of your returning solely upon my account. I will write you a longer letter, the first opportunity.

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*LETTER 1001

From Madame DE LA FAYETTE *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, Wednesday, October 10, 1691.

I have had cruel attacks of the vapours, which have not yet left me, and which adhere to me like the remains of a severe fever. In short, I am a fool, though I am certainly a tolerably wise woman: I wish to thank Madame de Grignan for calming my mind; she has written wonders to the Chevalier de Grignan.

Madame DE LA FAYETTE *also writes to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

(*Enclosed in her letter to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.)

I return you my thanks, Madame, and request you to order the Chevalier de Grignan to love me. I love him with my whole heart: this man is a man. Bring back your mother; you have a thousand affairs of consequence that call you here; beware of looking too narrowly into domestic concerns, and of suffering houses to obstruct your view of cities. There are more interests than one to be attended to in this world. Come here, Madame, come to me, for the sake of those who love you, and believe that you will at the same time be giving me the pleasure of seeing your mother.

Madame DE LA FAYETTE *continues and concludes her letter to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Good heavens, my dear friend, how glad I shall be to see you! I shall weep plentifully; everything makes me melt into tears. I received letters this morning from my son, the Abbé, who was in Poitou, within two leagues of Madame de La Troche. A gentleman of consequence, son-in-law of Madame de La Rochebardon, with whom Madame de La Troche is at present, came to take leave of my son, and it was there he heard of the death of La Troche [1],

[1] Killed at the battle of Leuze, September 18th, 1691.

by the *Gazette,* if it please you; for I had never mentioned it to my son, who describes to me the affliction of this gentleman at having such intelligence to communicate at his own house: this has made my tears flow afresh; indeed they flow often when I am alone. M. de Pomponne believed Madame de La Troche to be rich; I have written to him, and he has informed me that the Duchesse du Lude had deceived him, and that they have presented a petition for her. Croisilles is just gone from hence, he came from Saint-Gratien to see me: I gave your compliments to him: he is quite well. My grand-daughter squints like an owl: no matter; Madame de Grignan did the same; this is saying everything. I am come to the end of my paper, and am, if possible, yours more than ever.

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*LETTER 1002

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Grignan, October 27, 1691.

Our correspondence is so tottering, my dear cousin, that, having no hope of fixing it more firmly while we are at such a distance from each other, I wait for you at the cover, in other words, at Paris and Versailles, to answer your letter. In the meantime, I have a great desire not to attend to this exactness, but to pass lightly over all you tell me respecting your States, and come at once to what interests my heart much more, which is the pension we are informed the King has given you at a time when you had scarcely the civility to dare to ask him for it. This circumstance has pleased me; for, besides the favour being considerable, the charms with which it is accompanied must not be forgotten. I do not know all the particulars, and I request them from you; but I seem to perceive that M. de Beauvilliers has on this occasion acted the part of one of the best men in the world, and of a good friend, which is not less estimable, and which cannot be separated from

it. My heart told me that, soon or late, you would feel the value of so precious a friendship; and I experience true joy in finding that I was not deceived. We must love everything that God does. He would not permit your fortune to be such as from all appearances it was likely to have been: we must submit to this, and I fear I have felt the privation for you more keenly than you have felt it for yourself. You must accept and receive what he pleases to give you, at a period when your misfortunes render this benefit worthy of your gratitude. You must therefore thank God, the King, and your excellent friend. I do this internally, my dear cousin, with feelings which have made me but too much alive to all the sorrows of your life. This is the heartfelt congratulation which you will receive from me. Here follow some others, which are not the less agreeable for being less interested: those of M. de Grignan, of my daughter, my son, and M. de Coulanges, who is just returned from Rome. They all assure you of their own joy, and of the part they take in yours. I shall feel it in every instance, should this charm be the means of diffusing others over the rest of your life; if you are happy; if it secures you henceforth from the just mortifications you had experienced, and from the vexation of having always to ask favours of the King: in short, if you spend the time God has given you to serve him in true repose. I thank him with all my heart, and wish you his grace; for after all the deaths we have lately witnessed, and on which we might discourse for a year if we pleased, it is impossible not to wish a Christian death to those we love. This, my dear cousin, is all you will have from me to-day. We said that the last letter I wrote to you was a dull one: this is much in the same style; for why should we rejoice that you have formed a new attachment to this corrupter of the human race, whom Voiture has so much decried? But it ends in so lofty a strain, by wishing you everlasting blessings, that I fear I shall be accused of having mounted into the sublime.

Where is my niece de Dalet? Where is this Marie

de Rabutin[1], my god-daughter? I embrace them both, and address my letter to you at the house of the latter, believing nothing more natural than that you should be with her.

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*LETTER 1003

From Madame DE LA FAYETTE *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, January 24, 1692.

Hélas! my dear, all I have to tell you of my health is bad; in short, I have no rest day or night, in body or in mind; I am no longer a living being, so far as regards the one or the other; I perish visibly; I must die when it pleases God, and I submit. The intense cold we have had, prevents me from seeing Madame de Lavardin. Be assured, my dearest friend, that you, of all persons in the world, are the one whom I have most truly loved.

[*N.B. Madame de La Fayette, and the Comte de Bussy-Rabutin, dying in the course of the year* 1693, *this part of the correspondence naturally ends after the four following letters. It appears also that Madame de Grignan remained at Paris with her mother during the years* 1692 *and* 1693, *and that she returned to Grignan only a short time before her. In this correspondence therefore, there is no real hiatus, and consequently little probability that any other letters of this period will ever come to light.*]

*LETTER 1004

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, January 27, 1692.

We arrived here, my dear cousin, at the end of the year, soon enough for M. de Grignan to be received into

[1] Madame de Montataire.

the Order of Knighthood, but not sufficiently soon to have the honour and the pleasure of seeing and embracing you. I thought of the words of the opera:

J'aurois beau me presser, j'arriverai trop tard[1].

You did indeed set out at the time you mentioned, and I know from my niece de Montataire, that you are either at your country-house, or at Autun, quietly enjoying the favour the King has granted you. You required this indulgence; and though I have expressed myself very unseasonably, and very uselessly, by making comparisons between what might be, and what was, I have very much felt this last disposition of Providence, whose every arrangement I ought to adore, professing, as I do, to be entirely devoted to his will. It is indeed a folly to look back upon the past. I ask pardon of God, and of you also.

Let me hear from you; tell me what sort of life you lead: whether my niece de Dalet, and Madame de Toulongeon, do not contribute to render it happy: whether your mind does not contract, as M. Nicole expresses it, by the distance of the objects that set it in motion? My daughter and I found that we were a little injured; but we begin to recover, and our friends are once more willing to own us. I can answer for you, my dear cousin, and I have heard you were very well at Fontainebleau; and when you are not at Court I rely on my niece de Dalet to call forth your vivacity by the exercise of her own. I have too often recommended you to each other, to fear for either of you the accidents which happen to others. The whole Court is full of joy and rejoicings at the marriage of M. de Chartres, and Mademoiselle de Blois. There will be a grand ball, for which all those who say they have not a penny in the world are making preparations that will cost them at least two or three thousand pistoles. This makes us doubt their poverty, which, however, is real. But the French have resources in their wish to please the King,

[1] It will be in vain for me to press forward, I shall arrive too late. [Translation.]

which would be incredible, whatever we were told, if we did not witness them with our own eyes. We shall see therefore all the courtiers, old and young, dressed according to their age, and everyone most splendidly.

M. de Grignan and my daughter assure you of their best services. They have a little girl here, who, without possessing her mother's beauty, has so well tempered and softened the air of the Grignans, that she is really very handsome. You will some day perhaps judge for yourself. I sincerely hope so, and that you will continue to love me as much as I love you. I embrace my dear niece de Dalet.

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*LETTER 1005

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, April 12, 1692.

I suppose, my good cousin, that you did not wait for my answer, to be certain of my approbation of my niece's *bouts-rimés*. It would not disgrace the Duc of Burgundy's preceptor. It contains all that can be said on the education of a young man [1]. More noble and more solid lessons could not be given him. I congratulate this youth, who has so fine a name (M. de Langheac), that he will not be allowed to be a moderately worthy man, with a mother and a grandfather who so well know what he ought to be. I do not tell you that you both appear to me to have as much wit as ever; you must be fully aware of it yourselves. I wish you may be able to say the same of my daughter and me. To make amends for my fault in having said nothing of our friend Corbinelli, here he comes to talk to you himself.

[1] This sonnet, in the manner of the quatrains of Pibrac, was addressed to her son. It has appeared to the editor too mediocre to be inserted here.

M. DE CORBINELLI *also writes to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

(*Enclosed in Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ'S *letter.*)

Though I have so bad a cold, Sir, as to have my mouth shut to everything like wit, I have thought the verses I have seen excellent. Our friend, Father Bouhours, sent me this morning *Les Nouvelles Remarques sur la Langue* (New Remarks on Language). I found you very agreeably quoted, as a man whose authority ought to regulate the language. I tell you no news. There never was so much respecting the preparations in all quarters for a memorable campaign, of which you alone would be worthy of being the historian, since you cannot be the Captain. Adieu, Sir. If you were all I could wish, you would perhaps be more than you desire [1]. I am Madame Dalet's most obedient servant.

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*LETTER 1006

From the Comte DE BUSSY *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Chaseu, December 2, 1692.

Little stories do not displease you, my dear cousin. I send you one, written by Theophilus, in Latin, which appeared to me worthy of being translated, and of amusing you. Cured, thank heaven, of love and fortune, I am happy in being able to employ myself in trifles. I even find that they contribute most to the charms of life, for they cost nothing to the body or to the soul; and though I am convinced by experience, particularly within these five or six years, that the work of salvation alone is capable of satisfying the heart, it is still necessary for me to amuse my mind. God, who endowed me with cheerfulness at my birth, wishes me, no doubt, to enjoy myself; and espe-

[1] This must not be taken literally, nor must the philosophical Corbinelli be thought ill of for having adopted this language. He treated Bussy like a sick man, whose mortified vanity stood in need of some indulgence, to support the bitterness of his soul. These praises are not flattery, but consolation.

cially, when it is at the expense only of *Larissa* and *Glison*. Your niece is of my opinion. We both embrace you, and the dear Comtesse also, with all our hearts. I recommend our friend Corbinelli to read you the Latin of my little story, and to set off my French to the best advantage.

Translation of a Fragment from THEOPHILUS[1].
By the Comte DE BUSSY-RABUTIN.

Larissa was fond of telling stories, and she told them well. Finding herself in company one day, she was very desirous to recount the follies of her youth, which she did in the following manner:

"I was in the service of a Roman citizen with a young Greek, his slave, whom a shipwreck had reduced to the same extremity, though born free. Nature had imprinted upon the countenance of this young man, all the marks of nobility and of good education, which he owed to his birth, and the care of his parents. It was easy to perceive, that he was not born for the position to which his misfortune had reduced him. If he had to carry any burden, he sunk under the lightest that could be imposed: he was desirous however of doing everything, and forgot his birth, in endeavouring to accommodate himself to the present state of his fortune. But, unable to combat with the fatigue and hard fare of a servant, he at length became dejected, and was so indifferent about himself, as to neglect even to comb his hair, which was the most beautiful that ever was seen. In a short time, he became pale and wrinkled; his eyes were hollow and languishing; his hands rough and discoloured; indeed, it was no longer possible to recognise him. Sorrow had depressed his mind, as much as fatigue had injured his health. He often sighed, and his affliction excited my pity. I thought fortune very unjust

[1] This story is translated elsewhere, in a style more flowery, and more analogous to the original, which is written in the manner of Petronius and Apuleius. But Bussy's version presents a sort of simple elegance, which many readers may prefer. It has besides given an opportunity to insert the letter which follows, and which is the last of Madame de Sévigné's correspondence with her cousin. This is a sufficient reason for not deeming the fragment superfluous.

towards him; I exhorted him to take comfort; I wept over his misfortunes; I taught him the duties of his office, and I even sometimes assisted him in the discharge of them. This misery did not deprive him of a noble air, and an inexpressible superiority over me, which made me feel the difference of his birth, and to which I willingly submitted. He was sensible of the obligations he owed me, and thanked me with the politeness of a courtier. At length, his various good qualities made so strong an impression upon me, that, believing I felt only pity for his misfortunes, I found love for his person lurking in my heart, and I at length loved him to distraction."

Larissa, by this story, had attracted the attention of the whole company, but particularly of two young girls who counterfeited sleep, lest propriety should oblige them to retire, if they appeared to understand the story. One of them having opened her eyes, to look at Larissa, as if unintentionally, closed them again immediately. The other pretending to awake, "Is it day-light already?" said she, and blushed as she said it. The company understood their artifice, and it was a subject of merriment to them. In the meantime, Larissa had ceased speaking, by observing, that she would not finish the account of her adventure, from the fear of giving pain to these young girls; and she threatened the company with some old serious histories: but Eugenio, impatient to hear the rest of the story, "Ah, Larissa!" said he, "these girls have only feigned sleep, for the purpose of listening to you with less restraint. I assure you they are more eager than any of us, to know the end of your history. Continue, I conjure you," said he, embracing her. She consented, promised to finish the story as modestly as she could, and, making the young girls draw near her, said to them:

> Il est permis aux jeunes gens
> De n'être pas toujours si sages[1]:

and thus resumed:

[1] Young persons are allowed not to be always so prudent. [Translation.]

"At one moment, I complained of Love, and at the next I prayed to him. 'Great deity!' said I, 'either cure me of my passion, or make me beloved by its object.' But I could no longer eat, no longer sleep. The beauty of Glison (this was the name of him I loved), returned daily; for time, which compasses everything, had alleviated his sorrows. For myself, I was scarcely to be recognised; and, in proportion as the charms of Glison increased, my secret passion altered my mind, my countenance, and my disposition. I dared not reveal my love, and I was in despair at concealing it; but Glison knew not my disorder. He pitied me, and repaid with gratitude only, the obligations he owed me, contenting himself with assisting me in my duties as a slave, as I had assisted him in his. But, at length, finding myself no longer mistress of my passion, I saw plainly that I must avow it. One Friday then, O happy day! a day I shall never forget, having found Glison upon my bed, where he often reposed himself after dinner, I entreated him, bursting into tears, to take pity on me. He opposed not my wishes, and even appeared glad that he had saved my life.

"Enjoy yourselves, my children, while youth allows you to do so. The remembrance of past pleasures will be the only ones you will know in your old age."

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*LETTER 1007[1]

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ'S *Reply to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, December 10, 1692.

Your little story, my dear cousin, is so modestly wrapped up, that one may praise it without a blush; but the reflections of your letter have given us as much pleasure as the story. Your arguments contained in a dozen lines, which are at once just, solid, and playful, make us easily recognise your happy character, and say with our

[1] This is the last letter written by Madame de Sévigné to the Comte de Bussy, who died the 9th of April, 1693.

friend Corbinelli, that your translations do honour to the originals, but that no translator will ever do justice to you. I have only to wish you and my dear niece the long enjoyment of a life which might even excite the envy of those who pity you. Is it not true, niece? You will not contradict me; and you will both continue to love me,—if you please.

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*LETTER 1008

From M. DE COULANGES *to Mademoiselle* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, May 10, 1694.

I feel myself highly honoured, charming Pauline, by your goodness in addressing me, to make me the confidant of your friendship for the Duchesse de Villeroi: she certainly received your letter with every sentiment you could wish; and would already have answered it, but for the melancholy event of the death of Madame de Barbesieux [1], which has thrown all her relations and friends into great affliction. The poor little Duchesse [2] has been almost dead with grief, literally so; I saw her for three hours with the vapours, to so violent and unusual a degree, that we were quite alarmed for her: her grief is now confined to moderate limits; but it is a wound that will long bleed in the family. The Archbishop of Rheims [3] says, he shall never advise M. de Barbesieux to marry again, from the impossibility of finding another woman equally perfect: but I shall advise the contrary, if he will take one [4] from my hand; for I know a little masterpiece, not of despicable and perishable riches, but of every rare and adorable perfection, who might very easily make him forget what he has lost, and render him the happiest of men. After hav-

[1] Catherine Louise de Crussol d'Usèz, who died May 4, 1694.

[2] Marguerite Le Tellier, sister of M. de Barbesieux, Duchesse de Villeroi.

[3] Charles-Maurice Le Tellier, uncle of M. de Barbesieux.

[4] It is Pauline de Grignan that M. de Coulanges means, and the same to whom this letter is addressed.

ing wept and bewailed her for three days at his cottage at Lestang, he will return on Saturday evening to Versailles, and to his duty. The Duchesse de Villeroi is come here, to spend a few days with her mother [1]; for myself, I am going to-morrow with my weak legs, to carry my poor arms to Saint-Martin, where I shall be some time with Cardinal de Bouillon. I wish the air of Saint-Martin may restore my shoulders to their duty; but the wind is so dry and piercing, that it is more calculated to kill than to cure: have you such weather at Grignan? At length, the departure of Madame de Sévigné and the Chevalier de Grignan takes place to-morrow; you cannot fail to be pleased at having such guests: would to God I could accompany them! but what is deferred is not lost. I still believe firmly, that I shall some day find myself there again, in full admiration of all your grandeur; for this Chapter on one side, all these escutcheons in ducal mantles on the other, this magnificent Castle, these well-furnished apartments, these tables in the gallery, the crowd of persons going and coming, and then this Comte and Comtesse, who fill the Castle so well, and entertain their friends so nobly, are indeed to me neither more nor less than the glory of Niquée, and an abode which suits my taste in every respect: expect me then, adorable Pauline, and be assured that you will never see anyone arrive at Grignan who honours and esteems you more than I do.

I doubt not that Madame de Coulanges will give you herself some account of her health, which is much better than it was.

Madame DE COULANGES *also writes to Mademoiselle* PAULINE DE GRIGNAN.

(Enclosed in her Husband's letter.)

Since your departure, Mademoiselle, nothing has been talked of here but your letters: but I am tired of hearing more of your words than your deeds; you can never know what it is to feel your own loss, and it is a fortunate

[1] Anne de Souvré, Marquise de Louvois.

circumstance for you. I send you my compliments on the tragical death of Madame de Barbesieux; the same to Madame de Grignan; of whom it is very good of me to think, without complaining that she has taken Madame de Sévigné away from me to-day. I own to you that I can form to myself no idea of comfort, except in that of going to Grignan, where I hope you will receive me better than you did the first time I took this journey, when you did not make your appearance there. Adieu, Mademoiselle: I shall be very much obliged to you, if you will remind M. and Madame de Grignan of the way in which I honour them. I rejoice with you that I am not dead; you would have lost a person very much attached to your charms.

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*LETTER 1009

From M. DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, May 24, 1694.

It will be exactly a fortnight to-morrow since you took your departure; it is time therefore, my amiable gouvernante, to write to you at Grignan, and assure you that you are heartily welcome there. We heard from you at Moulins, and so far your journey had been prosperous; I hope it continued so, and that at the present moment, recovered from all your fatigues, you are enjoying the sight of many whom you love, and all the pleasure inseparable from the house you inhabit. Of myself, I must tell you that I set out for Saint-Martin's [1] on the same day you set out from hence; and as you are no enemy to details, I will give you an account of all my proceedings since then. I was at Saint-Martin's till the Saturday, I cannot say full of mirth and jollity; for I was never more dull nor more out of spirits, without knowing why, nor a worse companion: Saint-Martin's, and the Cardinal, have always inex-

[1] An Abbey beautifully situated near Pontoise, of which Cardinal de Bouillon was titulary.

pressible charms for me; but this shoulder and this hand, which are not free from pain, and which are continually playing me tricks, have thrown me into a stupidity and lowness of spirits, from which I cannot rouse myself. This makes me resolve to attend to my health; and for this purpose I have given myself up for a week past to bleeding and repeated medicines, from which I do not yet feel all the effects I expect to do; but it is to be hoped that, having myself entered on my duty, my good constitution will return to it also. This, then, my adorable gouvernante, is my present situation; I have had a great many visitors during my course of medicine, and when I am well I shall have employment enough, in going to thank all the good people who interest themselves so much in my health. I am also much better off than many who are afflicted with fever, the purples, and a thousand other disorders. M. de Harlay, the Chancellor's son-in-law, is very seriously indisposed; so is the President Le Coigneux's lady; but poor Mademoiselle de Sanzei is worse than either, and stands a chance, if God does not interpose, of falling into the same complaint as the late Duchesse de Gramont. It is said that perfumes and jonquils, at a time when such odours are fatal, have reduced her to this extremity. Her disorder has hitherto been qualified by calling it a rheumatism in the bowels; and there is no remedy that has not been resorted to, even to bleeding her in the foot three or four times within two days; in short, she is in such violent agitations and convulsions, that she has no rest but by taking opium, of which they give her too large a quantity: indeed, the physicians seem to be at a loss for a remedy in this extraordinary complaint. Madame de Coulanges has just sent Saint-Donnat (physician) to Mademoiselle de Sanzei, and his return will tell us what we have to expect, with regard to the cure of this poor girl; the misfortune is, that he cannot assist her long, for he is going away immediately. Madame de Poissi is brought to bed of a fine boy: congratulate all who bear the name of Maisons and Lamoignon. The whole city is finding a wife for M. de

Barbesieux [1], but it is certain that he is still too much afflicted to think of marrying again; I am willing to hope, from all I hear, that he will prefer solid worth to perishable treasures, when he finds himself obliged to have recourse to a second marriage. M. de Barillon is to espouse Mademoiselle Doublet to-day: the Chevalier de Bezons was also married yesterday. Do you know another person who is going to be married, if he is not so already? I mean the Marquis de Grignan; for the news is, that he is to marry, or has married, Mademoiselle de Saint Amand. It is for you, Madame, to clear up this fact to us; you have, at least, one advantage, that we have a very high opinion of all you will do or may have done; good money, and plenty of it,—this is a great thing in times like these. All the warriors take leave next week; Versailles and the noble houses will be quite desolate. M. and Madame de Chaulnes go on Thursday; they and Madame de Coulanges are reconciled, and with so good a grace, that there is no longer any remains of the *pétoffe* between them, the beginning of which you were witness to. I am going to Madame de Villeroi's, who intends to be bled to-day in the foot, merely by way of precaution, and all the family of the Louvois will not fail to be there. Next Thursday will be the procession of the shrine of Saint Geneviève; the Archbishop and Madame de Lesdiguières have not been able to prevent it this year [2]. Adieu, my amiable friend: I embrace you with infinite affection.

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*LETTER 1010

From M. DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, June 23, 1694.

It is a thousand years since we heard of you; what, my dear gouvernante, is the matter? Can you suppose that you

[1] It is well known, that after the death of Louvois, his father, he was appointed Secretary of War.

[2] The scarcity of grain, and the species of famine, which had af-

are indifferent to us? No indeed, we love you, and all the inhabitants of the Royal Castle in which you reside, dearly. I am just come from Versailles; where I have been for a whole week, leading a very pretty life with all my friends, male and female. I left Mademoiselle de Sanzei there, in the delightful road of convalescence: she is very much obliged to you for the concern you have felt for her illness, which has been a very painful, and indeed a very dangerous one; but in the end, youth has conquered; and in future she will not voluntarily rush into the perfumes by which she is surrounded, when she ought not to do so, though she attributes her illness more to a rowing upon the water than to the jonquils. But a strange adventure, which happened to me at Versailles, was the death of my little lackey, who, you know, sung so well. I arrived at Versailles on the Friday evening: in the night he was seized with a violent fever, and pain in his side; and so many fatal accidents crowded upon him, that he died on the Monday morning at ten o'clock: but why should he not die? The Duc de Sully and M. de Rebenac are dead. Madame de Verneuil and the Duchesse du Lude, who were going to Sully on their journey, reached no farther than Montargis; the Duchesse (de Sully), who travelled post, arrived at the end of the journey: and they are all returned here. The Duchesse is at Saint-Denis with the nuns of Sainte-Marie. The only son of the beautiful Madame de Fresnoi is also dead; in short, we see nothing but

flicted France during the year 1693, caused the procession of the shrine of Saint Geneviève to be demanded. Hénault, who makes mention of it, places it in that year, and yet we see that it did not happen till 1694. This is an anachronism of less consequence than any he could commit.

With respect to Madame de Lesdiguières, her connection with the Archbishop of Paris, Harlai de Chanvalon, is well known; as it is also that this prelate's connections with women were not the most edifying. He had passed from the see of Rouen to that of Paris. Among other ballads in vogue at that time against him, we have one very long one, of which every stanza ends with,

Il fait tout ce qu'il défend,
A Paris comme à Rouen *.

* He practises all he forbids, as much in Paris as at Rouen.
[Translation.]

funerals, and talk of nothing but sick people. The Princesse d'Enrichemont, now reigning Duchesse de Sully, has the small-pox, and Madame de Beringhen the measles; but I am much less concerned for them, than for Madame de Coulanges, who has lost her time and money with Saint-Donnat. The pains of the colic are returned with greater violence than ever; the swelling of her stomach and bowels is become so considerable, that, the disorder which threatens her being now no longer doubtful, she has for these three days past, with the approbation of the knowing ones, placed herself in the hands of Carette [1], who makes her take medicines, and the waters of St.-Mion, in which she is to drop seven drops of a liquid that works all the miracles of which you have heard. Madame de Coulanges suffered much from these medicines on the two first days; but she is now considerably better: I earnestly wish, as you may suppose, that this *better* may continue, and that we may soon get her out of the scrape: you cannot imagine how much uneasiness her disorder gives me, and what sad vapours it has sent into my poor head, of which I cannot boast. You will, no doubt, learn the news of Brittany to-day, from more quarters than one. The enemy's fleet presented itself before Brest, and wished to make an attempt: but twelve hundred men, who had embarked, were so warmly repulsed, that it is not supposed the fleet will risk a second attempt [2]: they were all killed or drowned; and it is affirmed that a nobleman of considerable consequence, who was at the head of the enterprise, was one of the first who perished. Langeron has done wonders upon this occasion. I doubt not that this attempt

[1] This Carette, an Italian who took the title of Marquis, was a quack, whom some success had brought into vogue, and who thereby merited the shafts of La Bruyère.

[2] Besides this attempt which the English made unsuccessfully near Brest, they, in the same campaign, attacked Dieppe, Le Havre, and at length Dunkirk, where they again made the attempt with an incendiary ship, which they called the *infernal machine*. This method, which had miscarried the year before at St. Malo, failed also in 1694. We have recently seen that the lapse of more than a century has not brought it to perfection.

of the enemy has given more than one subject of uneasiness to our friends [1], who are still at St.-Malo; but if the report be true, that the fleet has raised anchor, they will not be sorry to see the troops of Normandy come to their succour: God grant they may have no occasion for them; for, as we know the husband and the wife, *it would be the devil to pay.* The Abbé Têtu is as strange as ever; he has hired a house in the Rue Neuve St. Paul. This, my dear gouvernante, is all our news, at least it is all mine; for I only know the subject of the piece generally. Madame de Villeroi, who is here, knowing that I had just been writing to you, has desired me to say a thousand fine things to you from her; she is very attentive to Madame de Coulanges, whom she loves more and more, and about whom she is very uneasy: I never saw a better woman, nor one more worthy of being beloved and respected. I was with Madame de Lesdiguières yesterday, who at length gives me reason to hope for her portrait; but it will not be with the accompaniments, like that which is sold in the snuff-boxes. Has no charitable person sent you one to Grignan? Nothing can be more scandalous than this sort of box; and we are seeking for the painters with diligence, to punish them as they deserve [2]. My very amiable gouvernante, adieu.

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*LETTER 1011

From M. DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, June 28, 1694.

Effect, effect your marriage; you are right, and the public is wrong, very wrong. If I had known that Madame de Coulanges had told you all that was said, I should have been very cautious how I had repeated it to you; and if the letter you have written her had arrived two hours

[1] M. and Madame de Chaulnes.

[2] These snuff-boxes contained secret sliding panels, which when pulled out, showed erotic paintings, often most exquisitely done.

sooner, I should still have been very cautious how I mentioned the subject to you; all you have written to us both respecting it, is admirable, very true, and unanswerable: everyone knows his own business best; "one has unharnessed in the morning, and the other in the afternoon[1];" and whoever unharnesses is to be commended: it is a mark of sense, and of great skill; adopt therefore the party which suits you best; but will you confirm the public in its injustice? Make them give you a good round sum of ready money, that you may be at your ease: a large marriage-portion will justify your proceeding; draw, I say, as much ready money as you can, for this is the precaution that must be taken in such a case. The public says, and it is right, that we must not reckon with financiers for future wealth; and the public is convinced, and it is still in the right, that, peace being made, many will be so much pressed, that they will be ruined: take, therefore, all your measures well, and console yourself for an inferior alliance, by the comfort of having no more creditors, of being no longer dunned in your beautiful, grand, and magnificent Castle, by owing nothing to anyone, and by the gratification of giving sometimes into superfluities, which appears to me the greatest happiness of my life. This, lovely lady, is all the answer I have to make you. Your letters are excellent, and it is a crime to make no part of them public; but as the public would not profit by them, I agree with you in the opinion of silence; they would be precisely *pearls before swine.* I have not, however, been able to avoid talking all this over with Madame de Villeroi, who has good sense and a well-informed mind, and who dearly loves everything that bears the name of Grignan; who esteems and loves you also; who feels herself obliged by your attention in sending compliments to her; who entreats me to return them to you a thousandfold, and in the best style; and who is, in short, enraged, like you, against the public, which is constantly in a rage without knowing why. She approves all your reasons, she praises you with-

[1] The termination of one of Coulanges's Songs.

out end and without ceasing, and advises you to persist in your intention. One day, as you say with great justice, a thing is talked of, and the next it is forgotten; and when you present a pretty Marquise de Grignan to the public, and the public is convinced that you have received a fine fortune with her, it will only bring persons of the first quality before its tribunal who have set you the example, and do not now think themselves the worse for it. I have spoken my mind, and shall resume the subject no more.

Madame de Coulanges has given you an account of herself, which is not now a very just one: she had a very bad night the night before last; but the medicines she is taking cannot cure her instantly, and we must have a little patience. The Abbé Têtu must certainly die, for he can neither endure the person nor the conversation of Carette; and so great is his aversion to him, that he has deserted Madame de Coulanges; because Carette comes to see her daily, and spends a good deal of time with her. Madame de Coulanges does not differ very materially from the Abbé; but when life is at stake, *he can do little, that cannot do this*; and the Abbé, who wishes to be master everywhere, wonders at Madame de Coulanges, and, in his sleeve, takes it very much amiss that she does not get rid of Carette because he dislikes him: the Abbé has also taken amiss, that she has put an orange-tree in blossom into her gallery: in short, he is a very extraordinary being; and I fear the transmigration he will, no doubt, some day make, in leaving St. Paul's, where he is now going to reside, will be to the neighbourhood of the Incurables, to soften the name of the place where he will probably retreat, and end his days. I have not heard of the Chaulneses since the affair of Brest, which has terminated very desirably for them. Wheat and barley are very scarce here, and diseases and deaths very common. La Péraudière, brother of M. de Valentiné, was taken ill and died within eight and forty hours; but I am uneasy about another person, who is considerably indisposed, Madame de Louvois; she has a little fever, and frequent shiverings that molest her; she has

passed a very bad night; she has so much fear of being ill, that she will make herself so, and so much fear of death, that I fear she will die: the moment she is in the least unwell, it is the measles, the scarlet fever, the small-pox; in short, she is agitated with the constant apprehension of all these disorders: but can you guess what it is that gives me the most alarm for her? it is her immense riches, and the extreme happiness she enjoys. Madame de Coulanges has quite turned to-day towards the side of life; she finds herself much better than she has yet been. She has entertained Carette, Maréchal de Bellefonds, and *the divinities* [1], at dinner; you will suppose that the Abbé Têtu was not of the party; this is a fine proceeding of his. Carette still talks of setting out for Italy on Wednesday; but he promises his patient some drops, and tells her how she is to manage herself in his absence: to speak candidly, I am impatient to see Madame de Coulanges restored to her former health, for more reasons than one. Adieu, my dear Madame, this is a tolerably long letter. Continue your good offices to me with the inhabitants of your Castle, whom I respect, and take the liberty of loving according to their merits. I am highly obliged to the prudent Pauline for the two lines she wrote in your letter; I have many remembrances to make her on the part of the Duchesse de Villeroi, who never sees me without asking for her, and desiring me to say a thousand things to her in her name.

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*LETTER 1012

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to M.* DE COULANGES [2].

Grignan, July 5, 1694.

You make me breathe again, by telling me that Madame de Coulanges is much better; her last letter afflicted me to the highest degree. I am sorry that Carette has

[1] Madame de Frontenac and Mademoiselle d'Outrelaise.

[2] In this Letter Madame de Sévigné's reply on the subject of her grandson's marriage appears to have been wholly suppressed.

left her; I hope he has appointed Maréchal de Bellefonds his principal assistant, to direct her in the course of her medicines. It is a sad thing to place our lives in the hands of a man who firmly believes he is going to take possession of a sovereignity in Italy: I beg you to give me the continuation of a history in which I take so much interest. I very much pity Madame de Louvois with all her fears: this is one of the miseries attached to the blessings of life. You tell me nothing, my dear cousin, of yourself: think you, that your health and happiness are indifferent to me? M. de Grignan is in the neighbourhood of Nice, with a large body of troops, to repulse the fleet which was so ill received at Brest, in case of alarm. You know that the Lieutenants-General of Provinces are now Lieutenants-General of armies, which delights them, though, at the same time, it is their ruin. We have still some persons here who are passable, and who play at ombre. We read, and sometimes remain in our own apartments: in short, the days glide on. Our little troop loves and embraces you.

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*LETTER 1013

From M. DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, August 4, 1694.

I have just been spending the most delightful fortnight in the world at Meudon; indeed, it is fairy land, and I shall never comprehend why the King will not enjoy the enchantment; for the house, with its vast extent, is much more calculated for him than for Madame de Louvois; it is impossible not to agree to this. She also hopes that, peace being made, and plenty restored to the Kingdom, the King will have Meudon[1] himself, and give her the means of obtaining a house near Paris, more suitable for

[1] The King did indeed take it; but it was to give it to the Dauphin. Mademoiselle de Montpensier had given him her house at Choisy. The King thought his son at too great a distance from him; and either from regard, or distrust, obliged him to take Meudon in exchange for it.

her and the company she wishes to see, and less exposed to that with which she could very well dispense: I cannot think she is wrong. In the meantime I advise her to submit to circumstances, and to bear the inconveniences of Meudon with a good grace. She was even satisfied with this journey, because it brought her none but persons whom she wished to see. We returned on Saturday evening, to assist on Sunday in the pretty Abbé de Villeroi's last act of philosophy, who acquitted himself admirably; and there were assembled a good and numerous company above and below, for the ladies now come to the acts; and Madame de Villeroi gave a noble and magnificent collation to all those whom she had invited. But let us talk of other things. I had hoped, on my return, to find Madame de Coulanges going on in the same way of amendment in which I had left her; she had even been at Lestang, at an entertainment given by M. de Barbesieux only a week ago, at which I had seen her, and from which she returned to Paris at two o'clock the next morning, without finding herself ill. It is true, Madame, that instead of seeing her again with the same face, I found her wholly changed; which was occasioned by a return of her disorder, and an extraordinary drowsiness; notwithstanding which, Carette would have her bathe, which has reduced her to such a state, and has so weakened her poor stomach, that for the present he has suspended the bath, and even the drops. She has lost the power of digestion; the little she eats, without any appetite, returns again as it is taken; in short, she no longer knows where she is, and all those who have the care of her are greatly embarrassed. Must we continue Carette? must we discontinue him? must we knock at another door? must we go to Bourbon this autumn, without loss of time? in short, what must we do? We dare not give advice, because we dare not take upon ourselves the event; we are not however satisfied: after having passed three whole nights without closing her eyes, she at length slept for four or five hours during the last. I am sure this relapse will not please you; for she still finds as great a de-

gree of flatulency as at first; which shows the inefficacy of all she has hitherto taken to dispel it. The Abbé Têtu exults, and claps his hands; and this exultation serves only to displease and make us angry: for what other part can we take? Madame de Coulanges, however, is not without visitors; as she is sure to be found at home, all who know her come to see her; and every one gives his opinion, which, in my mind, is another evil. It is saying everything, to tell you that Madame de Monchevreuil has spent two afternoons with her; and that Madame Le Tellier, the late Chancellor's lady, of the age of ninety-six, passed the afternoon of the day before yesterday with her. I am sure you would not leave her if you were here. Madame de Coulanges desires me to say to you from her a thousand affectionate things. In the number of the visits she receives, you may suppose that Madame de Créqui and Madame de Villeroi are not deficient; it was therefore easy for me yesterday to show them the honourable mention you made of them in your last letter, and they have charged me to employ the strongest expressions I can use in proof of their gratitude, and in assuring you how much they are alive to these marks of your friendship. Madame de Créqui is very sore on the subject of Blanchefort; and you have omitted nothing that could be said upon the occasion to flatter her. Certainly, my dear Madame, you have only to place all your remembrances in my hands; I shall make a very good, and a very free, use of them; for you know all my friends, male and female. I am not sure that I shall not go, to-morrow, to Pontoise; I yesterday received a very obliging summons from my worthy Cardinal, and his Ambassador gave me to understand that he could very well send a carriage for me this evening for the purpose. I shall be there only as long as the state of Madame de Coulanges will permit it; for you can have no hesitation in believing, that her health will henceforth be the rule of my visits. This is my first duty, in which I shall take care not to fail; but she is herself desirous that I should go, alleging that her indisposition ought not to be

considered as an illness, the termination of which can be easily seen: I shall consider it as such, but I shall act with caution.

We have had a quarrel with Carette, but the particulars would be too long to relate to you. He was included in a party to Vaugirard, with Mesdames de Louvois, de Créqui, and Bernières; and Madame de Coulanges had crammed into it a little Madame de Séchelles, the friend of Madame de Pezeux, a very pretty woman, with whom Carette had declared himself passionately in love. It was hoped that this passion would amuse the company, and everything happened the reverse. Madame de Créqui went too far; M. de Barbesieux, who came in unexpectedly, appeared smitten with the little lady, purposely to make Carette jealous: in short, they carried the farce so far, that Carette returned to Paris in a perfect fury, calling Madame de Coulanges infamous, affirming that she had only taken this young woman there to sell her to her cousin, and that Mesdames de Louvois and de Créqui were excellent confidantes. All this was so whimsical, that nothing else has been talked of at Paris; but you must suppose that the actors in the piece have only laughed at it, and that the ridicule has fallen upon *the marquis* de Carette; if he had been better known, he would not have been admitted into such good company. He was a long time without coming to see Madame de Coulanges; but, at length, as she wanted to consult him, she sent Father Gaillard to ask pardon for her; and *the prince* immediately appeared, having left all his resentment at the foot of the crucifix; but as Madame de Coulanges relapsed after this *pétoffe,* many persons think her rash in resuming Carette's medicines. This is a rough sketch of the piece, which has been a most ridiculous one. Would you ever have taken your friend for a vender of human flesh? and such confidantes as those I have named, for accomplices with her?

Nothing new is going on here; and you are informed of public, and many private, events, by the Abbé Bigorre, and Madame de La Troche. Madame de Bagnols, who

set out on Saturday for Versailles, has fallen so sick there, that it has been necessary to bleed her in the foot with all possible expedition: this is very convenient to those who have lent her their apartments; but what business has she in that gallery? I send you her portrait: can anything be more laughable than this print, with her dogs, and her name engraved and spelt too plainly to be mistaken? This print has very much delighted Madame de Coulanges: it was Madame de Louvois who sent it me, and you will give it a warm reception. Adieu, my very amiable friend; a thousand affectionate remembrances, and a thousand respects, to you and all the inhabitants of the splendid Castle where you now are. I see your amusements, I see all your excellent society, and my mouth waters. The Archbishop of Arles has sent me a very good and a very handsome reply, and I shall write to him immediately. It is now, it seems, M. de Carcassonne who is ill.

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*LETTER 1014

From M. DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, August 27, 1694.

I have been passing three weeks between Pontoise and Versailles without baiting; in other words, without returning to Paris. You may hereby judge of the improvement in Madame de Coulanges's health; for had it been in the slightest degree equivocal, you will suppose I should not have left her, and that my stay would not have been so long. I was highly pleased, on my return, to find her looking much better and grown fatter; she does not, however, consider herself as well yet, because she has occasionally little returns of colic, and is not wholly free from flatulency, which seems disposed to establish itself in her stomach, and sometimes distends it very painfully; but, at length, she can eat, moderately, it is true; she has good nights, and she goes out, and receives company, as if

nothing were the matter. This has succeeded to the melancholy state of which I gave you an account in my last letter: she has returned to Carette's drops, intending however to let some days pass without taking them; she is, besides, exempt from the frequent visits of the *marquis*, because he has himself been ill, and does not yet go abroad. I have not failed, my dearest Madame, to read your letter to her; and she was very much gratified at the continuation of your friendship, and very much affected at the sentiments of the adorable Pauline, whose style and manner are so natural, that we are convinced her heart feels all she writes. Both Madame de Coulanges and I, therefore, are very much obliged by all the pretty things she says; and we earnestly entreat you, lovely Marquise, to thank her and all the inhabitants of your splendid Castle, who have had the goodness to interest themselves about us. But let us return to our folds, for you like details, and I think you formerly wrote to me that this was the style of friendship. It was on a Friday morning, then, that a coach and six from the worthy Cardinal de Bouillon's, took me from my own house, and carried me swiftly along to Saint-Martin's, to dinner; where I found M. and Madame de Croissi, Mademoiselle de Croissi, Madame de Saint-Géran, and Richard Hamilton, who had been there from the evening before: my vanity was satisfied at the reception that was given to me; what excellent fare, what a house, what walks, and what liberty! The Croissis went away on Saturday evening; but they were instantly replaced by the Comtesse de Furstemberg, and Mademoiselle d'Albret, a very pretty girl, second daughter of Madame de Bouillon. On Sunday arrived M. le Grand—

Madame DE COULANGES *here interrupts her Husband's letter to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

It is I who arrive at St.-Alexis, where I find an old child surrounded by toys, and contemplating his dolls with rapture: this child can read and write; he shows me that he has given you an account of all I had to tell you of my

health; you will therefore hear no further tidings of it, my friend, by this post; but I will assure you of the lively gratitude I feel for your kindness to me. Perhaps I shall recover, perhaps I shall die; but in the meantime, my dearest, I shall love you truly. I am not insensible to the many civilities I receive from the inhabitants of the *Palace of Felicity.* M. de La Garde has a great share in my gratitude, and as for the adorable Pauline, I am charmed with her; to know how to say such delightful things as M. de Coulanges has showed me, is a treasure which I am indeed very glad is not hidden from me. Never was an absent person less forgotten than she is here; she is talked of, she is praised; and I say mournfully, "but remembering her is not seeing her." I love her strangely; I think I ought to ask her pardon for it, and I have even the confidence to hope I should obtain it. Maréchal d'Humières is very ill; but Maréchal de Villeroi is in good health. My friend, did you never see a Madame Berthier, beautiful and blooming, young and healthy? She was taken ill, and died in four days; and after this, reckon upon anything in life as certain! I embrace you, my dear, and I feel pleasure in scribbling a few lines to you, which perhaps you cannot read. I have just found another curiosity here; it is the looking-glass Queen Marguerite used at her toilet: the dressing-boxes are wanting, but they are to be sought for all over the world; it is of much use for M. de Coulanges to have the relics of Queen Marguerite!

M. DE COULANGES *continues and concludes his letter to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Well said; this is a fine scribble, and can a woman of reason and understanding spell thus? I am avenged for all her wicked jests on me, by the well-founded hope that you will not be able to read them.

On Sunday, then, *arrived M. le Grand,* Madame d'Armagnac, with *the angels,* her daughters, Mademoiselle de Bouillon, and Madame de Beaufremont; Monday, to dinner, the Chevalier de Lorraine; and Tuesday, M. de

Bouillon, the Duchesse de La Ferté, and Langlée: all these composed an excellent party to eat the Cardinal's good things, and to make the pistoles fly about at *lansquenet,*[1] as if they had not been of the value of fourteen francs each. There was a great deal of blood shed, but it was not lost; and he became gay who was melancholy before, as he became melancholy who was before in good spirits: forty and fifty pistoles were lost and won; in short, we had good cheer, and great play. We all separated, some a day earlier, some a day later; but on the Friday, the Cardinal took me back to Versailles with Madame de Saint-Géran[2], who thought the situation of Saint-Martin very delightful. I was at Versailles from that Friday to the day before yesterday, in high glee; and, what is rare at Versailles, at full liberty; for, thank God, I see no one there but persons whom I wish to see, and those also who suit me. I have spent my time therefore with Madame de Villeroi, who answers to your remembrances exactly as you could wish, and who tells me, like you, not to be sparing of words in expressing her sentiments for you; with the Duchesse de Villeroi, who often talks of the adorable Pauline, and wishes for her upon every occasion; with Saint-Géran, *a beautiful pocket containing nothing*; with all of the name of Noailles, Boufflers, Croissi; then with Madame d'Armagnac, who has given me portraits of herself and her daughters; and with whom besides? with the Duchesse, the most gracious, and the handsomest Princesse that ever existed. I had free access there whenever I chose, and I told her that, notwithstanding the advances were made to me on the part of the other Princesses to visit them, I would devote myself to her alone. In short, my dear gouvernante, I kept quite clear of the vulgar; and I should not be returned now, if I had yielded to the pressing entreaties that were made me to stay longer at Versailles: but it was necessary to attend to the orders of Ma-

[1] A game of cards.

[2] We have already spoken of this lady, who was the confidential friend of Madame de Maintenon, as appears by the Collection of her Letters.

dame de Louvois, who is preparing for a long journey to Tonnerre, and Anci-le-Franc, and who will take no journey without me; so that here I am. She says she shall set out without fail, on Wednesday next; but so many persons tell her that she is going into a bad air, and wish to divert her mind from this journey, that yesterday she seemed to waver. If she goes then, I go with her, and our correspondence will be interrupted for a time; if she does not go, I shall not be very distant from Paris, and shall be within reach of still informing you of my movements.

The disgrace of Mademoiselle Chouin has made a great noise at Versailles [1]: the Princesse de Conti had the politeness to assure Mademoiselle de Sanzei that she had no interest in the subject that caused her to dismiss her. But what is this subject? It is upon this we reason, some in one way, and some in another; for if the Dauphin ever loved anyone, it was this girl. Has she been dismissed without his knowledge? The Princesse de Conti had some very private interviews with the King, which astonished everyone, and this is what they have brought forth. Mademoiselle Chouin is in Paris, with Madame de Lislebonne; and it is said that an apartment is preparing for her at the little Hospitalières.

You will hear the news of the army, which were

[1] M. de Clermont de Chate, of whom mention has already been made, pleased the Princesse de Conti; but he sought also to please Mademoiselle Chouin, her maid of honour, and, what is still worse, he sacrificed the mistress to the maid. For this waiting-woman, though ugly, was a girl of sense, adored by the Dauphin, and by her means they calculated on governing the Prince. It is said, that it was in concert with a hero, Maréchal de Luxembourg, that M. de Chate carried on this double intrigue. Be this as it may, a packet of letters from this personage, addressed to the Princesse and the maid of honour, arrived from the army with the Maréchal's dispatches; and was placed in the hands of Barbesieux, Secretary of State, who, like a faithful servant, carried it immediately to the King. We now easily comprehend the expulsion of Chouin, and the private interviews of the Princesse with the King, and even the equivocal terms in which she explained herself on the subject of her maid of honour. It must be remembered, that this Princesse was a widow, and singularly amiable; and as to Mademoiselle Chouin, that, after this adventure, she was only the more certain of her ascendancy over the Dauphin, who, in the end, privately married her. (See *Les Souvenirs de Caylus*, the *Mémoires de Saint-Simon*, etc.)

brought yesterday by little Bontemps, from the Abbé Bigorre; and I conclude by thanking you also for your details, and by entreating you to continue them. The dinner at *Rochecourbière* has made my mouth water; I see the enchanted spot from hence, and know its merit; nothing can equal your description of it. I condole with you, though rather late, upon the death of M. de La Fayette: his poor mother thought of nothing but of establishing his name and his family, at Court and in the world, and it is now only supported by the shoulders of a little girl [1]. It is said that M. de La Fayette's will, made by the care, and during the life-time, of his mother, has consoled his wife and M. de Marillac, who were in great affliction before they saw this testament, which is very disadvantageous to the widow [2]. M. de Lamoignon will tell you all the particulars better than I can; they say, it is the work of the Lieutenant of Police. Adieu, my amiable gouvernante; adieu, Lady Comtesse; adieu, divine Pauline, and all the worthy inhabitants of one of the most magnificent Castles I know. God bless you all, and grant that we may some day meet again. Madame de Morangiés is very ill: Madame Bénard de Rezé, our neighbour, is dead; and I have also heard of the death of one of my cousins d'Ormesson, who was a monk at St.-Geneviève, and, I believe, your godson. In short, death visits all ages and all countries. Pray tell M. de Grignan, when you write to him, how much I respect him, and do not forget the good Marillac, nor the Dean [3]. You must have heard the tragical history of Hanover [4]. The Court goes to Fontainebleau on the fifteenth of next month.

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[1] Marie-Madeleine de La Fayette, married afterwards to Charles-Louis Bretagne, Duc de La Trémouille, Prince de Tarente, first gentleman of the King's Chamber.

[2] Madeleine de Marillac.

[3] Of the Chapter of Grignan.

[4] We find in a letter of the Abbé Choisy's, dated January, 1691, this passage: "The Duc de Hanovre has caused the Prince Maximilien his son, who attempted to poison him, to be arrested." This refers to the consequences of that affair.

*LETTER 1015

From M. DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, September 1, 1694.

Adieu, my lovely gouvernante, adieu, Lady Comtesse, adieu, divine Pauline, adieu, Sir Knight, and all the charming inhabitants of the Palace of Apollo, adieu; I am this moment going to Tonnerre, and Anci-le-Franc; and I resign myself with submission to my wandering star, which does not lead me amiss. Madame de Louvois, contrary to the advice of the foolish people who opposed her journey, saying that a woman so rich and so happy as she is ought not to leave Meudon, has taken courage, and is setting out without listening longer to the flatterers of the Court; yet, if she were to fall sick, judge of the confusion and repentance that would overwhelm us. But it is to be hoped that God will preserve us all in life and health; still it is true, that there is actually no air more unwholesome than that of Paris, where everyone is ill and dying. The gospel of the day is, that Maréchal d'Humières died yesterday at Versailles; they delayed so long to tell him of his danger, for fear of alarming him, that it was at length necessary to have recourse to the Bishop of Troyes, to turn his last moments to advantage, in which he received the sacraments: this is a fine subject for reflection. The public has already disposed of all the great situations he occupied: I know not whether the King will decide in the same way. I wish, at least, the public may not be deceived in giving the artillery to Maréchal de Villeroi. His lady and the Duchesse followed the King yesterday to Marly: that seemed to me to be a good omen. The house of d'Humières is, besides, completely ruined; never was there so total a defeat; the Maréchal's widow will literally not have bread to eat: another subject for reflection on bad management. Madame d'Humières [1], who landed yesterday from her daughter d'Isenghien's, is

[1] Louise Antoinette-Thérèse de La Châtre.

retired to-day to the nuns of La Croix, in the Faubourg St.-Antoine, under the auspices of the Abbé d'Effiat, who will be security for her with the nuns. Madame de Coulanges is tolerably well; she has sent her *marquis* [1] a gold snuff-box, weighing two hundred crowns, and costing ten louis, under the pretence that her snuff was better than his. The *marquis* has not even condescended to come and thank her for it, and has given out, that she has made him a present in which there is more invention than magnificence: he pretends to have given her two hundred and fifty pistoles' worth of bottles (*of his elixir*): never was there so unreasonable a man, and Madame de Coulanges is fortunate in having got rid of him. I leave her with some satisfaction now that she is so much better. Adieu, my amiable gouvernante: I shall be forty-five leagues nearer to you, and in the neighbourhood of Bourbilly [2], if I do not mistake; I shall perhaps find the woods of Chantal in my way, and the mention of them will give me pleasure. I embrace you, beautiful lady, with infinite affection. Continue to write to me when it suits you: I have desired Madame de Coulanges to forward all your letters to me; do not therefore separate us, it will be useless, because hers will come to me after she has read them.

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*LETTER 1016

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to M.* DE COULANGES, *who was at that time at Anci-le-Franc, at the house of Madame* DE LOUVOIS.

Grignan, September 9, 1694.

I have received several of your letters, my dear cousin; there are none lost, and it would be a pity, for they have all their particular merit, and are the delight of our society. Your superscription, on the last, in which you

[1] Carette, her physician.

[2] The estate which belonged to Madame de Sévigné, and where she was born.

bade adieu to all by name, has given offence to no one: *Au Château Royal de Grignan.* This striking address gives us at least the pleasure of believing that in the number of beauties with which your imagination is crowded, that of château, which is by no means common, still holds its place, and it is one of its noblest titles: I must talk to you a little respecting it, since you are its admirer. The vile staircase, by which, to the disgrace of the *Adhémars,* you ascended into the second court, is quite thrown down, and is superseded by one of the most agreeable kind imaginable; I do not say large, or magnificent, because my daughter having been unwilling to remove all the lower apartments, the space was necessarily confined, and there a masterpiece has been effected. The vestibule is handsome, and makes a very comfortable eating room: you ascend to it by a large flight of steps; the arms of Grignan are over the door; you like them, and it is for that reason I mention it. The apartments of the prelates, of which you only know the saloon, are furnished very genteelly, and the use to which we appropriate them is delightful. But since we are here, let us talk a little of the cruel and continual entertainment that is given, particularly in times like these; only the same things however are eaten here, that are eaten everywhere else; partridges, which are common enough; but it is not common that they should be all like those you meet with at Paris, when everyone puts his nose close, and with a face of praise exclaims, "What a flavour! only smell!" We suppress all these astonishments; the partridges are all fed with thyme, marjoram, and every ingredient that enters into the composition of our perfume-bags; there is no choice. I may say the same of our fat quails, of which the thigh must separate from the body at the least warming, which it never fails to do; and of the turtle-doves, which are also superexcellent. As for the melons, figs, and muscadine grapes, it is really wonderful: if from any strange whim we should wish to find a bad melon, we should be obliged to send for it to Paris; no such can be found here: sweet white figs,

muscadine grapes, like grains of amber, which you may devour till they almost intoxicate you if you eat too many of them, because it is like sipping the most exquisite wine of St. Laurent. What a life, my dear cousin! You lead such another under the less burning rays of the sun; it does not at all remind you of La Trappe. See what a detail I have fallen into, it is chance which directs our pens; I return you all you send to me, and which I so much admire: this freedom is convenient; we do not go far for the subject of our letters.

I highly applaud the courage of Madame de Louvois in having quitted Paris, contrary to the advice of all those who wished to alarm her respecting the badness of the air: pray where is this bad air to be met with? who told them that it was not at Paris? We find it when it pleases God, and not before. Tell me a great deal of your grandeurs at Tonnerre, and Anci-le-Franc. I have seen this noble château, and a Queen of Sicily on a gate, from whom M. de Noyon proceeds in a straight line. You are fortunate indeed: on leaving the dignities of the Duc de Chaulnes you are introduced into the abundance and riches of Madame de Louvois: follow this beneficent star, so long as it will conduct you. I advised this, the other day, in a letter to Madame de Coulanges. She has told me of Carette: oh, what a fool!

How can we pass from all this, my dear cousin, to Maréchal d'Humières, the most amiable, the most beloved, of all the courtiers? He said to the curate of Versailles: "Sir, you see a man who has only four hours to live, and who has never thought either of his spiritual or temporal affairs;" he said truly, and it is a truth worthy of reflection. But I quit this serious subject, to ask you in a different tone of seriousness, if I may not assure Madame de Louvois of my most humble respects; she is so good, that she always gives us a desire to exercise this feeling towards her. Tell me who is of your party, and pay me with the money you have now in use. I am glad you are nearer to us, though it gives no greater hope; but still it is some-

thing. M. de Grignan is returned to Marseilles; it is the signal that we shall soon have him here. The fleet, which is near Barcelona, looks as if it would soon take the course which the season advises. All here love and embrace you, each according to his *pro rata,* and I in a greater degree than all. M. de Carcassonne is delighted with your letters.

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*LETTER 1017

From M. DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Tonnerre, October 3, 1694.

It is shameful, it is horrible, it is infamous, that since I have been in your neighbourhood I have not given you the least intimation of life; yet Tonnerre and Grignan, Grignan and Tonnerre; Anci-le-Franc and Grignan, Grignan and Anci-le-Franc, are all châteaux that may very well have some intercourse with each other without bringing disgrace upon any one of them, and without looking out at the doors to see which shall take precedence of the other. I have been a month at the States of Madame de Louvois; indeed, they are States in the literal sense of the word; and they are pleasant States too, compared with those of Mantua, Parma, and Modena. The moment it is fair, we are at Anci-le-Franc; the moment it is foul, we return to Tonnerre; we hold full Court everywhere, and every where, thank God, we are adored. When the fine weather invites us, we take long excursions to know the extent of our dominions; and when curiosity leads us to ask the name of this first village, "To whom does it belong?" the answer we receive is, "To *Madame.*" "And whose is that more distant one?" "It is *Madame's.*" "But in the valley yonder, that other which I see, whose is that?" "It is *Madame's.*" "And these woods?" "They are *Madame's.*" "There is a large extensive plain?" "It is *Madame's.*" "And I perceive a noble château?" "It is Nicei, a considerable estate which belonged to the ancient Comtes of this name, and it is now *Madame's.*" "What is

that other château, on an eminence?" "It is Passy, which belongs to *Madame,* and came to her from the family of Mandelot, by her great-grandfather." In short, Madame, everything in this country is *Madame's*; I never beheld so many possessions, nor such a complete circle. Besides this, *Madame* cannot excuse herself from receiving presents from every quarter; for what is not brought to *Madame,* to prove the sincere joy that is felt at being under her government? All the villagers run to meet her with the drum and the flute; some present her with honey, others with chestnuts; while pigs, calves, sheep, turkeys, partridges, all the birds of the air, and all the fish of the sea, wait for her at the château. This, Madame, is a slight description of the grandeur of *Madame*; for she is called by no other name in this country; and in the villages, and every place through which we pass, we are saluted with cries of *Vive Madame*! which must not be forgotten. But in the midst, however, of all this triumph, it must be said that *Madame* is not at all elated; she is civil, she is polite, and we are quite at our ease with her. For myself, my elbows are wholly at liberty; but I am also a principal personage at her Court. In addition to this, *Madame* is in much better health here than at Paris; she breathes a good air, and the best proof of it is, that we hear of no complaint that can create uneasiness. She therefore intends to pass All-Saints here, and not to return till other great folks do. She is delighted at having only to keep herself quiet; and I see her serving her provincial noviciate with so much zeal, that it is almost certain she will make profession, and that scarcely an autumn will pass, when the Court is at Fontainebleau, that she will not come to repose here, and innocently enjoy all the rural pleasures. We have not yet been dull a moment; for my part, I am so well, my good-humour and my appetite are so completely returned, and my poetical vein is so thoroughly open, that there is no folly I do not take into my head, first to amuse myself, and then to amuse my neighbour; for well-ordered charity always begins at home. I must make you a party in

our songs and masquerades: I enclose them. You will have the goodness to present them to the charming Pauline, and to join the chorus with her; it is thus I wish to reward you for the pleasing description you gave me some time ago of your dissipation at *Rochecourbière*; I never saw a better: and I have added the epistle to the former perfect ones, which I preserve in my treasury. We shall have no large party here from Fontainebleau, as we had hoped: the Maréchal's lady, and the Duchesse de Villeroi, are fallen sick at Paris, and have alarmed us; but our fear is at an end. Bad air, death, and diseases, are still prevalent there; but the principal thing for me, is, that Madame de Coulanges appears to be out of the scrape; she visits and is visited, like any other person; and she applies herself so little to a holy life, that there is every appearance the physician will not visit her long: God grant he may not, and bless us all.

I hear from Paris that your marriage [1] is finally resolved upon; that M. de St.-Amand is purchasing for his daughter a variety of dresses of the most magnificent kind, that you have had this little girl at Grignan, whom you have found still richer in perfections than in wealth, and that before you take her to Paris, you will keep her three years at Grignan to make her a prodigy. And who is it that tells me all this? Not Madame de Coulanges; consequently it is the public voice: whether it says right or wrong, I leave you to decide. I was delighted at the marriage of the little d'Ormesson and M. d'Aguesseau [2]; I never saw a more suitable, nor a more desirable, match. The first President has said all that can be said, that it was the alliance of merit and virtue. I have paid all your compliments to our *Queens of Sicily*: the grandeur of the

[1] Of the Marquis de Grignan with Mademoiselle de St.-Amand.

[2] The same, no doubt, who was afterwards the celebrated Chancellor of France. His father had quitted the Controllership of Languedoc, in which his courageous humanity had not been able to subscribe to the implacable measures of the Court against the Protestants. But the new Ministers, Beauvilliers and Pomponne, would not suffer him to be punished for his virtue.

house of Clermont is displayed in every nook and corner of Anci-le-Franc; and I am always lost in wonder how it is possible to see so many beautiful and magnificent possessions go out of the family, without expiring with grief. M. de Louvois, with all his favour, deserves that this justice should be rendered to his memory: that he never entered upon one of the estates, which was not, as we may say, thrown at his head; there is no Lord, great or little, that can reproach him with the smallest compulsion; and this may pass for a masterpiece in the situation he held.

Adieu, dearest Madame; believe still that I am not unworthy of the friendship with which you honour me, by the good and sincere affection which I entertain for you. Suffer me to walk through this Royal Castle of Grignan, and, going from apartment to apartment, to pay my respects and homage to those who occupy them: it is not necessary to name them, you guess my intentions wonderfully well. I have only to mention the apartment of the good Martillac; indeed, I would glady rejoin you, one and all, and I will not despair of doing so, that I may not die with vexation. Madame de Louvois received all your compliments very agreeably, and has ordered me to return them to you with interest, and to entreat you to distribute some also from her to the beautiful Comtesse, to the charming Pauline, and to all who bear the name of Grignan. I suppose you do not fail to weep heartily over all who die at Paris: you were apparently afflicted at the death of Madame de Poissi, on account of M. de Lamoignon. We hear, from Fontainebleau, that poor little Captain Saint-Hérem had a fall in hunting, and that his thigh is broken three fingers' breadth below the hip; this is a very dangerous accident at his time of life, and I am very much grieved at it. You have made noble reflections, in your usual way, on the death of M. Fieubet [1]; but adieu.

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[1] Formerly Chancellor to Queen Anne of Austria, a man of information and a pleasing poet.

*LETTER 1018

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to M.* DE COULANGES.

Grignan, October 14, 1694.

Your letter, my dear cousin, could not be too long expected; it has delighted us all; we have read it over and over again; we have sung your songs over and over again; and when M. de Grignan arrived yesterday from Marseilles, where he had been on business, the first thing we did was, to read the letter and the songs once more. They found their place, after the first surprise he gave us was at end: for he had fallen on a step at Sorgues, and had bruised his nose so much, and his head also slightly, and was covered with such immense plasters, that neither *La Rapinière* nor *Le Destin*[1] ever wore more remarkable ones; but, convinced that it would have no ill consequence, we resumed our mirth at your expense, and never did the beginning of a discourse captivate the auditors more agreeably. The château of *Anci-le-Franc, that of Grignan*; *Tonnerre, Grignan*; *Grignan and Tonnerre*; this equality, this balance, must equally please the living and the dead. After that, you represent to us, as in a mirror, the beauty, grandeur, magnificence, extent, of all these possessions, and then you exclaim, "How is it possible that the Lords of such royalties could determine to part with them?" Alas! you give the reason yourself in one of your songs; it is because the hospital has long been attached to the noble house of Tonnerre: this is the true, and only reason; a reason which is incontrovertible; a reason which closes the lips; a reason, in short, which breaks through stone walls, which causes everything to be Madame de Louvois's, and makes it a fortunate circumstance to have found a Minister rich enough to purchase such sovereignties, which you place with justice far above those of Parma and Modena. For myself, I can very easily comprehend

[1] Characters in Scarron's Comic Romance.

the happiness of these people, weighed down with their own poverty and that of their masters, at finding themselves under the dominion of a woman of high rank, the grand-daughter of Gilles [1], and of the Mandelots, replete with merit, virtue, and wealth, to dispense on all occasions according to their different wants. What an advantage! what a protection! and how must it dispose them to cry *Vive Madame* with their whole hearts! It is quite the country for making presents, and these presents will be returned to the givers with interest. Nothing can be prettier than all your conceits; the apparitions, the masquerades [2], and the hero confined and preserved in an armoury with his descendants! My dear cousin, you have surpassed yourself, which is saying a great deal: but that little Chapel of ease, at your bedside, which, no doubt, you have had measured, and which is sixty-three fathoms in length, makes us think of our Chapter (of Grignan), which was supposed to be one of the finest in France. Do you know, that this Chapel is like the Church of Notre-Dame at Paris. My daughter desires me to give you a thousand remembrances, and to assure you that she is delighted to find you again in good humour, and in the full enjoyment of your poetical vein. She entreats you, like me, to thank Madame de Louvois for the honour of her remembrance. Pauline has assisted me in composing a tune for your delightful verses: she loves you with all her heart; and how is it possible, my amiable friend, not to love you? If you were so just as to love those who love you, I should fare well. All our troop return your remembrances double-fold: your name and your praises resound throughout this Castle; and why should you not return, so long as there are Popes to make, and Cardinals who will love you?

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[1] Gilles Souvré, Maréchal of France.

[2] The volumes of *Amadis*.

*LETTER 1019

From M. DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Anci-le-Franc, October 29, 1694.

We are still at our magnificent château. Madame de Louvois has formed a taste for royalty and solitude, two very opposite things, which she was not acquainted with: in short, hers is the taste of the great Lords of the good old times, who thought themselves very well off at home, and whose ambition went no farther than to remain masters of the great possessions which their fathers had left them: they went to visit their sovereign from respect; but, their court paid, and this duty discharged, they were not sorry to find themselves sovereigns also, and to come and hold their own Court in their turn. Madame de Louvois, satisfied, and justly satisfied, with her situation, has been so much pleased at a liberty she had never before enjoyed, and which it was impossible she should enjoy at Paris, or even at Meudon, that she is insensibly taken in for All-Saints, and I see her resolved not to quit her kingdom till the fifteenth of next month: for my part, I willingly obey her laws; and the more I know of her mild and pleasing administration, the more content I am to live wherever she pleases. Will you not acknowledge, after this, that my second marriage is a very happy one, and that you never heard of a more complying husband than I am, nor of a better-regulated house than ours? When Madame de Louvois is at Tonnerre, it is all noise, all tumult, all the attributes of royalty; when she is here, it is not Madame de Grignan in her château, exposed to an infinite number of neighbours, and the homage of all the Provençaux; but it is Madame de Sévigné at her *Rocks*, reading, walking, writing to Paris, receiving letters, taking long walks into the country on foot, and, in short, leading a rural life, in all freedom and pleasure; a life, too, which Madame de Louvois so much enjoys, that she forgets there are a Fontainebleau and a Versailles in the world.

We are just arrived from Tonnerre, where we have been to receive Madame de Courtenvaux [1], who cavalierly and genteelly has left Fontainebleau post-haste, to come and place herself by the side of her mother-in-law; we have all been delighted to see her, and we do not cease to question her respecting the country she comes from: we make no stranger of her, and her company is a fresh amusement to us. On her arrival we did not fail to present to her the amiable Amadis, who is the best possible companion, and the most certain resource against ennui. We are going very prudently and rationally to spend the holidays here, and then we shall make a Saint-Hubert, a little like that we made three years ago in the Royal Château of Grignan; with this difference, however, that if the beast escapes us, it will not have so far to fall. Madame de Courtenvaux has been receiving every sort of honour at Tonnerre; there were even a splendid ball and masquerades; she is therefore no more sorry than we are to be in quiet here, far from the world, and noise; for we have not even neighbours to worry us with their importunity.

Such, Madame, is our situation; like reasonable beings, we are more to be envied than pitied. I am delighted that my last letter went through the journey so happily, without going to Paris, and it gives me courage to send this to you also by the same way. My vanity has obliged me to show yours to Madame de Louvois, who was delighted with it, and took pleasure in reading it more than once; for, with the rest of her good qualities, she also possesses that of understanding good things; and, in reading certain letters, of giving them their proper tones. But where do you learn, my lady Marquise, that if the heir [2] to all these possessions had been married in a certain way, he might enjoy them still? Ah! is he not so married? will he not have millions with his wife [3]? But it is because he was too eager to sell, and it is too late for him now to re-

[1] Marie-Anne-Catherine d'Estrées.

[2] François-Joseph, Comte de Clermont and de Tonnerre.

[3] Marie d'Hannyvel de Mannevillette.

pent: it is because it was time for Anne de Souvré to appear upon this horizon, and that it was so ordained from eternity. It must be owned too, that the people of these cantons are happy in the change; for she has no anxiety but to relieve them, and to bestow her charity on those who require it the most.

But what is it Madame de Coulanges tells me, of a report being spread at Paris, which she must explain to you, that your marriage is broken off? I am the more surprised at this, because, in your last letter, you mentioned it as a thing done; and you all seemed to be highly pleased at it. For my part, I should now be sorry if it were at an end; for, seeing the change that has taken place in these estates, I am of opinion that it is better, be it at what price it may, to retain what comes to us from our fathers, than to leave it to chance, founded upon a petty point of honour, which in time overturns the best houses; I am, therefore, most amiable gouvernante, impatient to know the truth of this report, as taking more interest than anyone in what concerns the family of Grignan. I entreat you to assure every member of it, of my respect and veneration; and you, my dearest cousin, to believe, that in honouring me with your good opinion, and, I will add, with your affection, you oblige one who esteems and loves you the best.

Madame de Louvois has received with pleasure all the praises you give, and compliments you pay her. She orders me to thank you sincerely, and to distribute also through your château many compliments on her part: she wishes me to send the prudent and rational Pauline three couplets, which I have added to the adventure of *Gradafilée*; suppressing the couplet I had made on the Duchesses, her daughters, which renders the work much more complete. If you are not acquainted with Amadis, what I send will be Greek to you.

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*LETTER 1020

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, October 29, 1694.

I was informed, yesterday, that your marriage[1] was again in train; that is, that conditions were sent to Madame de Grignan, which she would be wrong not to accept: and as I suppose she cannot be wrong, I conclude the wedding will take place; and I rejoice with you, my dear friend, accordingly.

The King is at Choisy, where he remains till Saturday; all the world is returning in crowds; the army of Flanders is broken up. We shall not have Madame de Louvois and M. de Coulanges till the eighth of next month; they have M. de Souvré and Madame de Courtenvaux in addition to their society. Madame de Villeroi (*la Maréchale*) is gone to spend the winter at Versailles, with her daughter-in-law; we thought we should be very sorry to separate. I have seen, Madame, the most beautiful thing that can be imagined: it is a portrait of Madame de Maintenon, by Mignard; she is dressed in the costume of Saint-Françoise. Mignard has embellished it; but it is without fulsomeness, without the lily, without the carnation, without the air of youth; and though all these perfections are wanting, he shows a countenance, a physiognomy, superior to anything that can be said of it; animated eyes, perfect grace, no ornaments, yet the most beautiful portrait that ever was seen. Mignard has also painted a very fine one of the King. I send you an impromptu madrigal of Mademoiselle Bernard's, on seeing these two portraits; he has had great success here: you will judge whether we are right. Mademoiselle de Villarceaux is dead of the small-pox, without confession, and without having had time to disinherit her cousins. Ma-

[1] The marriage of the Marquis de Grignan, Madame de Sévigné's grandson, with Mademoiselle de St.-Amand, whom he espoused shortly after.

dame d'Epinoi, the Princesse, is brought to bed of a son; and since that great day, nothing but firing and drinking is going on at the Place Royale. My dear friend, adieu.

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*LETTER 1021

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE COULANGES.

Grignan, November 16, 1694.

I know not, Madame, where the letter, which I address to you, will find my cousin; it is full of trifles unworthy the accounts he gives us daily of his travels. I know not whether you remember your last letter, and with what grace and politeness you excuse yourself for having showed one of mine; and how you assure me, that since the world has seen none of them, it is a sign that I can have written none. I wish, my friend, I deserved all your encomiums on this subject; and I pity you for not receiving your own letters: this is all I can say. I believe nothing can now prevent us from concluding our marriage; in short, everything is settled, and it appears to me that all the actors necessary to this ceremony will be assembled from every quarter in a fortnight. M. de Grignan has had attacks of giddiness, which have alarmed us on account of his frightful fall: it was a miracle that his head was not dashed in pieces: it was three weeks after the accident that this giddiness showed itself; but we are assured that it is of no consequence. He sends you a thousand compliments, and a thousand after those: he said, the other day, that he would write to you, and I promised to inform you of it. Adieu, my dearest friend; when I do not name Pauline, it is not her fault, for she is always alive to you, and enjoys your wit and your letters in a degree which is meritorious to herself; she entreats you, not to forget her.

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*LETTER 1022

From M. DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, November 17, 1694.

Here I am, safely arrived, and safely restored to my delightful apartment, whence I write, adorable gouvernante, to you, to congratulate you on the marriage of the Marquis de Grignan; which, I hear, is not only resolved and fixed, but perhaps by this time made and concluded. You are well assured that I wish you all every possible satisfaction; and my wishes are certainly most sincere, since no one can be more interested than I am in all that concerns the good, illustrious, and ancient house of the Adhémars engrafted upon Castellane. God preserve to them *ad multos annos* their beautiful and magnificent châteaux; and may they, above all things, beware of building an hospital, for soon or late an hospital brings misfortune. I was right when I informed you that the Church of Tonnerre was sixty-three fathoms long; it is said to be equal in length to the Church of Notre-Dame in Paris; but divine service is not performed there as at Grignan; no venerable Chapel is there to be seen, like that which has caused me emotion every time I have beheld it, and given me equal respect for its founders. I arrived here on Saturday evening. Madame de Villeroi (*la Maréchale*) is come to pay a visit to Madame de Louvois, and I am going with her to-morrow to Versailles, and perhaps from thence to Pontoise, to give myself back to my illustrious friends. I know not when I shall return, which makes me write to you to-day, for your sake, and for the sake of all who are married and all who are unmarried, in the Royal Château where you reside; but as it is impossible to write one's exercise in so many ways, I put all my compliments into your hands to distribute them; and I entreat you to spare no terms to express every sentiment of my heart and soul. I am not satisfied with Madame de Coulanges's health: I

*LETTER 1622

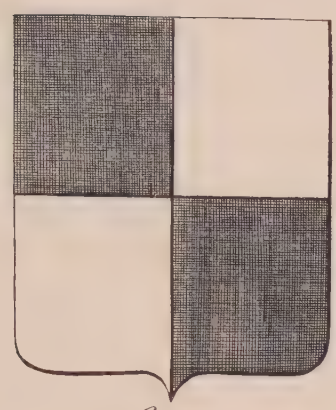
From M. DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

[illegible] 11, 1684.

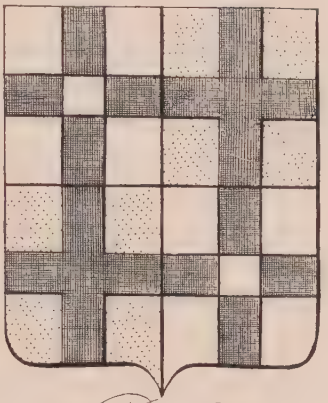
Here I am, safely arrived, and [illegible] restored to my delightful apartment, whence I [illegible] gouvernante, to you, to congratulate you on the marriage of the Marquis de Grignan; which, I [illegible] not only resolved and fixed, but perhaps by this time [illegible] and concluded. You are well assured that I wish you all every possible satisfaction, and my wishes are certainly most sincere, since no one can be more interested than I am in all that concerns the good, illustrious, and ancient house of the Adhémars engrafted upon Castellane. God preserve to them *ad multos annos* their beautiful and magnificent [illegible]; and may they, above all things, beware of [illegible] for [illegible] late an [illegible] brings misfortune. I was right when I [illegible] the Church of Tonnerre was [illegible] it is said to be equal in length to the Church of [illegible] in Paris; but divine service is not [illegible] there [illegible] Grignan; no venerable Chapel [illegible] me emotion [illegible] [illegible] and perhaps from thence to Pontoise, to give myself back to my illustrious friends. I [illegible] married and [illegible] are unmarried, [illegible] where you [illegible] but as it is [illegible] ways, I put all my [illegible] hands to [illegible] them; and I [illegible]

HERALDIC ARMS

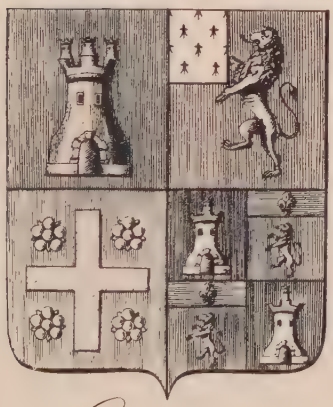
of the families of



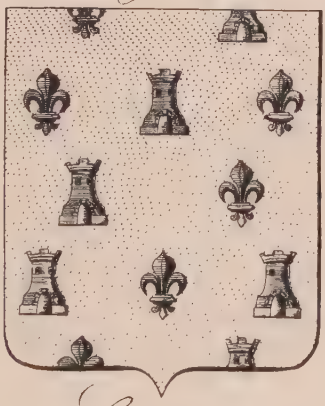
Sévigné



Bussy



Grignan



Simiane

found her again with pains in the stomach, and just apprehensions of not recovering her former state; she continues Carette's medicines. God grant that she may benefit more by them than she has yet done; but I fear, from appearances, she will not be able to dispense with going to Bourbon in the spring. I am very uneasy respecting her; her situation interrupts the perfection of mine; for I am wonderfully well in body and in mind; though aware of the gout which seized me so unhandsomely last year, on the twentieth of December. Adieu, my lovely friend: I am a thousand times more yours than my own. Madame de Villeroi (*la Maréchale*) entreats you to suffer all her compliments to you, and those who bear the name of Grignan, to pass through my channel: she is not a *writer* from inclination; but she knows as well how to think and speak, as if she wrote. You ought certainly to be satisfied with the manner in which she speaks of everything that regards you, and with the warmth with which she takes up the follies and sayings of the vulgar.

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*LETTER 1023

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, November 19, 1694.

It is a fortnight, my friend, since I wrote to you; I inform you of this, lest you should not perceive it. I had not received your letters, which made me fear that you did not wish for any more from me. Are you at the wedding? Shall you be there soon? I wish to know what concerns you all, because I take a real interest in you. All the party from Tonnerre are arrived in perfect health. M. de Coulanges has been extremely mortified since his return: a printed book of his *Songs* has appeared, and at the head of this title an admirable panegyric of his person: he is said to be born as much for things solid as frivolous; proofs are given of the latter. He is very much hurt at

the circumstance, and the more so from my not being able to take it seriously: to all he says, I reply, *Songs, songs.* He is gone to Versailles, and from thence to Saint-Martin's; it is to be hoped that he will be consoled for this book by writing a second before his youth has passed away. You wish me to give you some account of my health: indeed, my friend, it is very far from good; Carette gives me what he pleases, and I swallow his medicines without confidence and without success; but I think it would be still worse to change my physician daily: I must have patience, and believe that we only die when it pleases God. I enclose you some verses, which the Abbé Têtu has desired me to send you; they are in his own style. A report prevails that the Marquis de Moui will have Pipaut's house; it is said that he makes one of his footmen dress like a stag, and that he pursues him every night with a horn: what think you of this hunting equipage? M. de Harlay is not yet returned from his negotiations; everyone wishes for peace, but has little hope of it. Here are more verses of Mademoiselle Bernard's; notwithstanding all this poetry, the poor girl has not a petticoat to wear; but it matters not, she has paint and patches. Adieu, my dear friend; forget me not, I entreat you.

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*LETTER 1024

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, November 26, 1694.

I sent the letter you addressed to me for M. de Coulanges to Versailles, where he has been fixed since his return. I was very much tempted to open it; but discretion gained the mastery over the desire I always have to see what you write; in your hands, everything turns to gold. I am extremely obliged to M. de Grignan for still remembering me: his fall really makes me uneasy, and I entreat you, my dear, to inform me of the state of his health, be-

cause I am sincerely interested in it. The verses I sent to Court were very well received: the person to whom these verses were addressed, has written me the most delightful letter in the world; you will judge of it by its effect, when I tell you that but for my ill health, which makes it so unpleasant to me to remove from one place to another, I should have immediately set out for Versailles. I swallow Carette's drops incessantly; and all I know is, that they do me no harm: there are few medicines of which we can say as much. To proceed: I went yesterday to see Madame (*la Maréchale*) d'Humières; she lives in a wretched house in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, where there is no room, except in the court, for her to place her canopy. The Duchesse d'Humières, on her side, occupies another very small house on the Ile. If the Maréchal's lady had a little courage, she would have given the preference to a convent, till something better offered. M. du Maine comes to-night to sleep at the Arsenal; he is to entertain all the ladies who reside there to supper; the young Madame de La Troche will shine, for she is the beauty of the place. Madame de Boisfranc has the small-pox, and so has the first President's son; in short, no place is free from it. I told you of the mortification of M. de Coulanges on the subject of his *Songs*, which have even been ill chosen for publication: his eulogium is placed at the head of the book: this being the last misfortune that could happen to him, he has felt it as keenly as the Captain did, who, after seeing his son expire, and losing the battle, with indifference bewailed only the death of his slave. Madame de Montespan is returning here; she has given a bed, worth forty thousand crowns, to M. du Maine, besides three other very magnificent ones. She has given her pearls to the Duchesse. Adieu, my dear friend; say a thousand things for me to all your beautiful and excellent society, and, above all, continue me in the good graces of the charming Pauline.

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*LETTER 1025

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, December 10, 1694.

A fortnight has elapsed without my writing to you; but I keep my excuses till I really write, for my letters can only be melancholy and dull. I am losing all my friends. The death of Maréchal de Bellefonds [1] has given me real sorrow; the last visit he paid was to me; I saw him in perfect health, and six days after he was a corpse: his death, it is said, was occasioned by an abscess in the knee, and it is pretended that if it had been lanced, his life would have been saved; but you are not the dupe of this sort of repentance, we must go when our hour is come: the grief of his family is truly pitiable; for myself, I feel the loss most keenly. In addition to this death, I have to lament that of Mademoiselle de Lestranges, who had been my intimate friend for twenty-five years: after this, you will not be surprised at the gloomy complexion of my thoughts. My health is very bad: Carette exercises his art on me in vain: he gave me a medicine, a few days ago, which made me very ill; but he said, as to Don Carlos, *It is all for your good* [2]. I have some tolerable days, and then returns of colic more violent than ever; I am resolved to take no more medicine, but to live with this disorder as long as it shall please God: the worst that can happen, happens so soon, even with good health, that the event is not worth troubling ourselves about; it is pain only that is formidable. You see, my friend, by the recital of my melancholy, the confidence I have in your friendship. I feel, however, the pleasure of knowing that you are all happy. The Abbé de Marsillac informed me yesterday of the infinite wealth of M. and Madame de Saint-Amand, and of the Marquise de

[1] Died on the 5th of December, 1694, aged 64.

[2] The expression made use of by the executioner, who was preparing to strangle this young Prince, by the command of his pious and execrable father, Philip II.

Grignan, their daughter; he saw them at Vincennes: he says they are the best people in the world, and that they have brought up a prodigy for you; in short, he spent a great deal of time in singing their praises to me; and I assure you I was not tired of hearing them, for I take a sincere interest in everything which relates to you and yours. I ask you, as a favour, to give compliments from me to M. and Madame de Grignan; I am too much out of spirits, and too ill, to write to anyone but you; and you would, perhaps, willingly dispense with this preference. M. de Coulanges is still at Court, where M. de Noyon[1] cuts a principal figure; he is the only one there at present, and the Court is always in want of such an amusement. He will be received, on Monday, at the Academy (Français); the King has said he expects to be left alone on that day.

The Abbé Têtu was here when I received your last letter; he was highly pleased at the reception you had given to his stanzas[2]; he sends you a dissertation on Montaigne. I must not forget, my friend, that I was obliged, a few days ago, in very good company, to say all I knew of the charming Pauline; my heart had so much share in the portrait I drew of her, that I really believe it resembled her; at least, it was said that such a person ought to

[1] François de Clermont-Tonnerre, Bishop and Comte de Noyon.

We have already spoken of the extreme vanity of this prelate, in Letter 73, of March 11th, 1671, in the first volume. What Louis XIV. said on his reception at the Academy, was pure irony. The Abbé de Caumartin, who replied to him as a Director, had the misfortune, or rather the pleasure, of seeing that every phrase of the grand eulogium he made on him appeared an epigram. The discourse of this Abbé is curious, his jeers are very evident: his incense could deceive only the idol. We may judge by the following instance: after having observed that it was the King who wished M. de Noyon to be appointed, he added: "He knows your worth; he knows you thoroughly; he loves to discourse with you, and when he has spoken to you, a cheerfulness diffuses itself over his countenance, which is visible to everyone." Notwithstanding the notoriety of the Bishop de Noyon's folly, Dalembert has attempted to prove that it was overcharged: it is difficult to believe that the public in his time did not know him better than a panegyrist who wrote sixty years after him.

[2] The Abbé Têtu had written religious stanzas on divers passages of the Scriptures, and of the Fathers.

be sought after from one end of the world to the other, by all the most deserving in it. I believe we shall have M. and Madame de Chaulnes at the end of this month. Maréchal de Choiseul has executed your orders: it is true, that I no longer see him; he says he has been told, that he made himself ridiculous by visiting ladies so often; I have suffered him to believe that he was not misinformed, and at length I am free from one visit a week. He has done wonders for poor Maréchal de Bellefonds; he is the only one who has spoken to the King for the whole family. Adieu, my dear; always embrace the beautiful Pauline for my sake: how I abuse your good nature, in asking things so hard to perform!

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*LETTER 1026

From Monsieur DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, the last day of the year 1694.

I am at length at the great city, where I have not made any long stay for these four months; for you know, Madame, that since my return from Tonnerre, I have divided my favours, for six months, between Versailles and Saint-Martin, where I have certainly led a very pleasant life; but, at length, here I am; we must give a little of our time to our *wives* and our friends at Paris, and not wholly forsake our relations and old acquaintances. Everyone tells me, that I am in such good health, that my colour is so fresh, and that I am so young, that, *by St. John, I believe it.* In short, the twentieth of December is past, and I am on my legs still, like any other person: it is a pity that the season should be thus advanced; for if I could have foreseen so perfect a state of health when I was at Ancile-Franc, on *my faith, on my sworn faith,* I would have taken the Lyons stage-coach by the way, and at the present moment should be singing, *Hymen Io, Hymen O*! Is it not true, my adorable Grignans, that you would have given me a hearty welcome to your magnificent Castle, and

that you would have admitted me to your wedding? What are you doing? is it over? is the victim offered up? and has the sacrificer performed his duty well? must I pay my congratulations to you all in form, and separately? I believe, indeed, that you do not wish it, and that Madame de Sévigné will have the goodness, when you are all assembled together, to read you this wretched letter; for the purpose of distributing, according to their ranks, all my respects, duty, services, and most sincere attachment for the whole illustrious house of the Adhémars, engrafted upon the stock of Castellane, to whom I wish prosperity *for ever and ever.*

My Lord Marquis, we must have no trifling; we must speedily have a fine child of your own making, by which means you will raise your parents to the dignity of *grand*: for myself, I do not at all despair of seeing your children's children; and if I attain this happiness, I flatter myself you will have the goodness to present me to them, as having the honour of being the nephew of their great, great, great grandfather.

But, my Lord Comte, how are you? do your giddinesses continue? I am indeed very uneasy respecting you, without however believing that any ill consequences can arise from a fall so long ago: in the name of God, take care of yourself, and let this serve as a warning to you, not to slight the assistance of an arm whenever it offers itself to support you; for my part, I am constantly hanging upon the arm of my equerry, and I find it very useful.

But, my amiable Chevalier, must I always see you in the gout? it really drives me almost to despair. I have nothing to say to the gout; but I have tried a new remedy for my shoulders and my arms, which has succeeded wonderfully. You must, without any other ceremony, fold a piece of linen three or four times double, place it on the part affected, and then, with a hot iron, iron yourself as you would linen. I was last attacked at Versailles; I cried out, "My shoulder!" The irons were immediately put to the fire, Madame de St.-Géran's women-servants ironed

me thoroughly, and I never since cried out "My shoulder!" This remedy I shall in future adopt for whatever is called rheumatism: it is as well to mention that the iron should not be too hot.

As for you, my Lady Comtesse, I am sure you are handsomer than ever: I pay you my compliments, and thank you for the excellent and entertaining letter you did us the honour of writing; you ought never to doubt that I approve everything you approve, and that I am perfectly satisfied at seeing a daughter-in-law come into your family, of whom I hear such wonders: there are not two opinions respecting her pleasing figure, and her noble and polished manners, which do honour to her education. I am very impatient to have the honour of seeing you all together: but I must also make my bow to the illustrious prelates, and to M. de La Garde, and send them some little compliment.

To you, charming Pauline, I must wish a husband, and a husband worthy of you; in forming this wish, you will see plainly that I will no longer stand in your way; no, truly; I would rather lose my little finger, I have already told you so.

I now return to you, adorable gouvernante, to thank you for having just read the above to your audience, and to assure you that I honour and love you more than my life. Now that I am at Paris, and that I shall be there some time, I hope we shall have frequent correspondence with each other; for, indeed, there are no means of writing in the country I have just left. I have put the whole house of Armagnac into my basket, which occupies me even now. Suffice it to tell you, that my last office was to escort the Duchesses de Valentinois, de Villeroi, de La Feuillade, and Mademoiselle d'Armagnac, to the play; that I made a fifth with them on the front row of one of the boxes; and that, to complete my happiness, the play was *Cinna,* with which I was more delighted than ever. What details, and what pleasing details, I have to tell you! But these must be reserved for another time; my letter is long enough.

Our Chaulneses are upon the road, and will be here immediately; their return is another motive for bringing me to Paris. Continue to love your little cousin, my dearest gouvernante, and believe me to be a thousand times more yours than I can express. I will not conclude without saluting the Dean at the head of his venerable Chapter, without caressing Mademoiselle de Martillac, nor without striking up a *croustillantes,* which shall resound at the four corners of the château. I must also add my thanks in this place for a pleasure which you have procured us, without knowing it. The Chevalier de Sanzei, a very fine young man, and Madame de Grignan's godson, is here; and not knowing where to lodge him, the Abbé Bigorre has had the goodness to open the Marquis de Grignan's apartment to us, which we have furnished, and have fixed him in it for the short time he has to remain in Paris; we thought you would approve this; he will not make much dirt there, as you may suppose, from the care we shall take of him by day. Adieu, my most adorable; when once I begin writing to you, I cannot stop. Madame de Villeroi (*la Maréchale*) is not a *writer*; you must all therefore, as many as you may be, content yourselves with the compliments she has commanded me to give you, without haggling for terms, as if she had written to you individually; she takes your part with all and against all, and speaks very highly of you, and of everything you do.

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*LETTER 1027

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, January 14, 1695.

I thank you, my friend, for having informed me of the conclusion of your romance; for all you tell me is romantic. The heroine is charming; the hero we know; but it appears to me that you make more substantial repasts than these Princes and Princesses did. I am delighted

that M. de Grignan is well; this circumstance has added much to the charms of the entertainment. I yesterday informed Madame de Chaulnes of your marriage[1], who is arrived in good health, and who exclaimed, "Good heavens! they are married then!" as if she had never heard of it before. She had slept at Versailles; she had seen Madame de Chevreuse and all her friends there. It is impossible to be more occupied than she is with what has been told her of the death of M. de Luxembourg: if you, my friend, were here, she would certainly say: "Gouvernante, he died like a Christian: MONSIEUR was almost constantly in his room." It is true, that Father Bourdeloue has said, that he had not lived like M. de Luxembourg, but that he wished to die like him. Madame de Maintenon is well; she has been much indisposed; she now goes out daily, preparatory to her journey to St.-Cyr. I had a visit, yesterday, from a modern *Andromache*. Madame (*la Maréchale*) d'Humières appointed M. de Tréville and the Abbé Têtu to meet her yesterday in my chamber; she informed me that she no longer saw the Duchesse d'Humières: who could have believed that interest would have occasioned such a disunion?

It is reported here that the Princesse of Orange[2] is dead; but this news wants confirmation. The poll-tax is at length passed, and fixed. I have always forgotten to give the Abbé Têtu's compliments to you, and to the whole house of Grignan. Adieu, my dearest; I embrace, I love you, and wish for you always. M. de Coulanges lives wholly at Court; it will not be said that he is led by interest, whatever country he inhabits; it is always his pleasure that governs him, and he is happy: what more is necessary?

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[1] The marriage of the Marquis de Grignan and Mademoiselle de St.-Amand.

[2] Mary Stuart, daughter of James II., King of England, and wife of William III., King of England, who was at that time only known in France by the name of the Prince of Orange.

*LETTER 1028

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, January 21, 1695.

Be assured, Madame, that we no longer recollect that there was ever a M. de Luxembourg [1] in the world. I pity you for being where you are, only on account of the reflections which you give yourself the trouble of making on the dead, who are here already forgotten. M. de Luxembourg's best friends very frequently assemble still: their pretext is, to lament him; and they eat, drink, laugh, are merry, and "of Charon, not a word." This is the way of the world, the world to which we are so fondly attached. The Princesse of Orange [2] is scarcely mentioned, who was only thirty-three years of age, was handsome, was a Queen, had power, and died after three days' illness. But the greatest news is, that the Prince of Orange is ill, very ill: the disorder of the Queen was contagious; he did not quit her an instant, and God grant she may not have quitted him long!

A beautiful and magnificent scene took place yesterday, at the Chaulnes' Mansion. MONSIEUR spent almost the whole of the day there, with his usual goodness and agreeable manners to the mistress of the house. The Duchesse's apartments are in the highest style of perfection; from the salon to the sanctum, everything is furnished with those beautiful damasks, embroidered in gold, with which you are so well acquainted: in the bed-chamber a chimney-piece, of inexpressible beauty and magnificence, has been erected; there were large fires throughout the house, and so great a quantity of tapers, that the sun would have been obscured if they had contended together. Madame de Chaulnes went this morning to return MONSIEUR's visit, and afterwards to Versailles for a few days,

[1] Who died the 5th of January, 1695, aged 67.

[2] Died the 7th of January, 1695.

which has prevented her writing to you. There are no pleasures but at Grignan, my friend; but the worst is, that there are none for us at Paris when you are at Grignan. I revere and esteem all the inhabitants of that beautiful château. The Marquis de Grignan has written me the prettiest letter in the world: it has been deemed so by connoisseurs. Render me every good office in your power with his lady, but particularly, my friend, with yourself, I entreat you. The amiable Pauline is daily spoken of here, and all her friends remember her so affectionately, that she is an ingrate if she cares no longer for them; provided however she does not forget me, I pardon her all the rest. The little Duchesse de Sully, who is in my opinion the old woman, has just desired me to give you a thousand remembrances from her. Continue to love me, my dear friend, I conjure you.

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*LETTER 1029

From Monsieur DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, January 21, 1695.

Good heavens, my dear gouvernante, what excellent letters you write, and how much pleasure do your details give me! I have seen the wedding as distinctly as if I had been present at it; I have seen the beautiful château illuminated, the company that filled it, the splendid dresses and ornaments of the bride; the three sumptuous tables served in the gallery; all the apartments richly furnished and lighted. I have even heard the music; in short, your entertaining accounts have made me lose nothing, and have relieved me from the anxiety I felt at that time to see the tables served in the gallery. I thought the place very cold, but the two chimneys, of which you make mention, have warmed my imagination; and the only inconvenience I experienced at this nuptial feast, was from eating too much; for never did I meet with better cheer. You have indeed

acquitted yourself admirably in these details; but who will inform me whether we have really a Marquise de Grignan, and whether we may expect nephews worthy of their ancestors? Let me be assured, at least, that the Marquis's wedding-night was not like his father's, and I shall hold it as certain. With respect to myself, I still lead the same life, my most amiable Marquise: sometimes at Versailles, sometimes at Paris, and always in good company. At Paris, I divide my nights between my two *wives*; for I spend as many in the neighbourhood of the Richelieu quarter [1], as in the Rue des Tournelles: I have often been detained by the horrible weather we have had, for it was really dangerous to venture into the streets, particularly at night.

The good Chaulneses are at length here, just the same as you have always seen them, and still disposed to give entertainments to their friends: their house is wonderfully improved; and the Duchesse, who is always so much averse to any alterations that are proposed, is constantly delighted when she finds them done, and is the first to approve them. MONSIEUR, with whom you know she is so great a favourite, came to see her yesterday, and paid her the most agreeable visit in the world. Madame de Coulanges was invited to assist her in doing the honours; and she did not fail to go, as you will suppose. I was not at the Chaulnes's when MONSIEUR was there, because I dined in the Faubourg St.-Germain; but I arrived soon enough to find very handsome fires in all the chimneys, and every mark of a rich house, where they know how to live in style. MONSIEUR went also to see Madame de Rohan, who has lately lain-in; and the Dowager Princesse d'Epinoi, who has been ill.

The death of the Princesse of Orange is a subject of never-ending discourse: even yesterday there were persons who betted that she was not dead; be this as it may, the King, her father, has resolved to receive no visits, and to wear no mourning. Mademoiselle d'Hocquincourt is

[1] At the Louvois Mansion.

to marry the Marquis de Feuquières; and Madame de Bracciano [1] gives little balls, which are over at ten o'clock; at which all the heiresses that are candidates for husbands assemble, and it is who shall dance with them? This is all our news. I am now going to dine at the Chaulnes' Mansion; the husband and the wife are going, after dinner, to Versailles. I am earnestly solicited to go to Saint-Martin's, and I know not whether I shall not go on Sunday with the Duc de Montmorenci, who has led the Cardinal to hope that he will bring me there: it is an excellent house to be in, at all times and seasons. Adieu, my most adorable; I thank you for having so ably distributed my compliments; I entreat you to go on, and to be assured that no one in the world is more devoted, or more affectionately attached, to you than I am. Madame d'Armagnac has sent me her portrait, and those of her two daughters [2]; you will suppose that it was necessary to give them a place; but be not alarmed for your own portrait, it still occupies the same station, and has a stronger hold in my heart than it would have in iron or brass. Madame de Coulanges is tolerably well: she begins to eat more heartily than she did.

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*LETTER 1030

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE COULANGES.

Grignan, February 3, 1695.

Ah! talk to me not of Madame de Meckelbourg [3]; I renounce her: how, in the name of God, and even of humanity, could she keep so much gold, so much silver, so much furniture, so many jewels, in the midst of the extreme distresses of the poor, which, of late, have been over-

[1] The Duchesse de Bracciano was afterwards the celebrated Princesse des Ursins, who governed Spain under Philip V.

[2] The Duchesse de Valentinois, and Mademoiselle d'Armagnac.

[3] The beautiful Duchesse de Châtillon, sister of Maréchal de Luxembourg. See the note, Letter 36, of December 20th, 1668, in the first volume.

whelming? But how must she appear in the eyes of the world—the world, whose esteem and approbation we wish to preserve beyond the tomb? How could she bear to be thought the most avaricious of beings? avaricious to the poor; avaricious to her servants, to whom she has left nothing; avaricious to herself, since she almost starved herself to death; and in dying, when she could no longer conceal this horrible passion, to appear, in the eyes of the public, avarice itself? My dear Madame, I could discourse for a year upon this subject; I abhor this phrensy of the human mind, and it is a personal insult to me to abuse it as Madame de Meckelbourg did: we loved one another very much formerly, we called each other sisters. I renounce her; let her name be mentioned to me no more.

Let us talk of our Chaulnes' Mansion, which is precisely the contrary: these are adorable people, and make a worthy use of their wealth; what they receive with one hand, they dispense with the other; and if they had no ingots of gold at St.-Malo's, they would abridge themselves to support the high station in which God has placed them. The poor feel their liberality; in short, they are people who cannot be too much loved, and honoured, and admired. I am so fascinated with them, that I even give the credit to M. de Chaulnes of having taught friendship to MONSIEUR; it is a science which persons of his rank have not often the happiness of knowing. I am glad not to be forgotten in this Mansion; I entreat you, my amiable friend, not to forget me yourself. Pauline embraces you, and can no longer dispense with your kindness. We are still engaged in wedding-visits: the ice gave way with Mesdames de Brancas, and Mesdames de Buous, ladies of consequence, whom we had desired not to come: they were on the point of falling through it, and were in danger of their lives, in coming to congratulate us: this is the way in which people love in this country; is it the same at Paris? I, however, am satisfied, at least; and I swear to you, that I shall have real joy in receiving you.

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*LETTER 1031

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Monsieur* DE COULANGES.

Paris, February 3, 1695.

Madame de Chaulnes sends me word that I am fortunate in being here in the sunshine; she thinks all our days are woven with silk and gold. Alas! my dear cousin, it is a hundred times colder here than at Paris; we are exposed to every wind; it is the south wind, the north-east wind, it is the devil; it is who shall insult us; they fight among themselves, which shall have the honour of confining us to our apartments. All our rivers are taken; the Rhône, the furious Rhône, cannot resist them; our writing-desks are frozen, our benumbed fingers can no longer guide our pens; we breathe nothing but snow; our mountains are charming in their excess of horror: I wish every day for a painter, who could make a good representation of these frightful beauties: such is our situation. Relate it to our good Duchesse de Chaulnes, who fancies us to be in meadows with parasols, walking under the shadow of orange-trees. You have formed an excellent idea of the rural magnificence of our wedding[1]; everyone has shared in the praises you bestow, but we know not what you mean by the wedding-night. Alas, how coarse you are! I was charmed with the manner and modesty of the evening; I informed Madame de Coulanges so: the bride was conducted to her apartment; her toilet, her linen, her night-clothes, were brought; she took off her head-ornaments, was undressed, and went to bed; we knew nothing of who came in, or went out of, her room; everyone retired to his own apartment. We arose the next morning, without going to the bride-folks; they also arose, dressed themselves: no foolish questions were asked them; Are you my son-in-law? Are you my daughter-in-law? They are what

[1] The marriage of the Marquis de Grignan.

they are. No gay breakfast was prepared; everyone ate and did as he pleased; everything was conducted in silence, and with modesty; there were no uncomfortable looks, no confusion, no improper jests: this is what I had never seen before, and what struck me as being the most becoming and the pleasantest thing in the world. The cold freezes me, and makes the pen fall from my hands. Where are you? at St.-Martin's, at Meudon, or at Bâville? What happy spot contains the youthful and amiable Coulanges? I have just been railing against avarice, to Madame de Coulanges: it gives me great joy, from the riches Madame de Meckelbourg has left, to think I shall die without any ready money, but at the same time without debts; this is all I ask of God, and is enough for a Christian.

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*LETTER 1032

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, February 15, 1695.

It is evident that you have forgotten the climate of Paris, my friend, since you believe that it is colder with you than with us; never was there a winter like this. The sun has showed himself for these two days, but he does not suffer himself to be felt, which is a privilege you enjoy at Grignan, I am certain. I can easily understand that Madame de Grignan takes a pleasure in dispensing with visits; this is an advantage I enjoy in the centre of Paris; but I have no reason to trouble myself with them; I have no children, no family, and, thank heaven, no taste for these fatiguing occupations; I have old age, and sufficiently bad health: all this confines me to my chimney-corner with a pleasure which, for my own part, I prefer to apparently greater ones. But one retreat I admire, which is that of

Mademoiselle de La Trousse; God bestows on her a great portion of grace, and her situation is now enviable. Madame de Chaulnes is constantly wishing for rest, and is always on wing. She gives magnificent dinners: the Chevalier de Lorraine, M. de Marsan, the Cardinal de Bouillon, are of her parties, and this is the case every day of the week. Madame de Pontchartrain is much indisposed; the Comtesse de Gramont is returned to Court in excellent health. Madame de Meckelbourg is only remembered by her avarice. It is said, that M. de Montmorenci is to marry Madame de Seignelai; I can scarcely give credit to this marriage. M. de Coulanges arrived yesterday from St.-Martin's and from Versailles; but he alighted at the door of Madame de Louvois [1]: *honour to whom honour is due.* I can easily comprehend that we may reconcile ourselves to a husband who has many wives; and I wish M. de Coulanges had one or two more like Madame de Louvois. Maréchal de Villeroi took the oath yesterday [2], and afterwards the staff: he made the King wait a long time, while he was dressing; he had a blue velvet coat of extraordinary magnificence, and his fine countenance set him off more than his coat. The Duchesse du Lude has made me promise to give you a thousand compliments, and a thousand affectionate remembrances from her. The King has given Madame de Soubise the apartment Maréchal d'Humières occupied at Versailles; Madame de Soubise's, to the Princesses d'Epinoi; the Princesses', to M. de Rasilly; and of the Duchesse d'Humières, not a word. Adieu, my dear friend, I embrace and love you heartily. I fear the charming Pauline will forget me at last; absence leaves us everything to dread, even when we are happy. Continue, I entreat you, to distribute my compliments through the château de Grignan. I am very much obliged to the Chevalier (de Grignan) for the honour of his remembrance, and I conjure you to thank him for me: I am truly interested in his disorder; his friend, Father de

[1] M. de Coulanges called Madame de Louvois his second wife.

[2] For his position of Captain of His Majesty's Life-Guards.

La Tour, preaches at St.-Nicolas; and, if I am able to go out, he shall be my preacher during Lent. All the sonnets written in praise of the Princesse de Conti, have no doubt been sent to you [1].

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*LETTER 1033

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, February 22, 1695.

I have lost my little secretary, my friend, and I cannot bring myself to show you my vile writing. I am trying a new secretary [2]; let me know if you can read his. The news which makes the most noise here, is the marriage of the beautiful Pauline; it is said that the Abbé de Simiane has gone and will be present at the wedding; when I say I know nothing on the subject, no one will believe me. The Duchesse du Lude says she has heard it from the Chevalier de Grignan; for myself, I pardon the secrecy you have observed towards me, provided it be true; you will therefore suppose that I passionately love M. de Simiane.

The Duc de Chaulnes gives magnificent dinners; he has given one to Madame de Louvois, as he would have given to M. de Louvois; another to the Chevalier de Lorraine, and the whole house of MONSIEUR; I was at the first, and sent M. de Coulanges to the second: in proportion as my age increases, his diminishes; so that I think myself almost too old to be his mother. All the courtiers are become poets; nothing is to be seen but *bouts-rimés,* some as full of praise as others of slander; God forbid I should send you any of the latter: there is one in praise of Cardinal de Bouillon, which passes for a song; what say you to it, my friend? What say you, also, to the *prince dau-*

[1] This can only be understood ironically. The adventure of M. de Clermont Chate, and of La Chouin, gave rise to numerous epigrams against the poor Princesse. Many of these vile ballads were by the Duchesse de Bourbon, the daughter of Madame de Montespan, as the Princesse de Conti was of Madame de La Vallière.

[2] M. de Coulanges.

phin? I leave this story to be told you by my secretary; for he pretends sometimes to write, in his way. The marriage of Mademoiselle de Croissi with the Comte de Tillières [1] is said to be a fixed thing. Madame de Maintenon is still languid, but she is in much better health. Madame de Gramont appears at Court with the figure of a new beauty; she is perfectly restored.

The Abbé de Fénélon appears surprised at the King's present [2] to him: in returning him thanks, he told him he could not consider a favour which removed him to a distance from the Duc of Burgundy as a reward: the King said that he did not intend to oblige him to constant residence; and at the same time, this worthy Archbishop pointed out to the King, that by the Council of Trent, prelates were only allowed to be absent for three months from their diocese, even in business which concerned their personal interests; the King represented to him the importance of the education of the Princes, and consented that he should live nine months at Cambray, and three at Court; he has given up his only Abbey. M. de Rheims has said that M. de Fénélon, thinking as he did, had done right in this; and that he, thinking as he did, had done well to keep his. Adieu, my dear friend: your absence is still insupportable to me, let me not be forgotten in this Château de Grignan; it is your business, I remind you of it. I affectionately embrace the charming Pauline. Mademoiselle de Lenclos is as much in request by women as she formerly was sought after by the other sex; is it possible not to hate old age after such an example? The Abbé and the Chevalier de Sanzei set out yesterday to keep Lent with their mother; the latter will do all he can to make a bow to his godmother [3], on his way to his ship.

[1] This marriage did not take place. Mademoiselle de Croissi was married in 1699 to the Marquis de Bouzoles; and in the same year, the Comte de Tillières married Mademoiselle du Gué Bagnols, Madame de Coulanges's niece.

[2] Of the Archbishopric of Cambray.

[3] Madame de Sévigné.

M. DE COULANGES *continues and concludes his wife's letter to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

First, Madame, how do you like this small paper? Does it not interrupt you sometimes in your reading? For my part, I prefer the good old-fashioned paper our fathers used, in which there was plenty of room for details. It is a week since I returned from St.-Martin's and Versailles, to pass the rest of the flesh-days at Paris. Nothing can equal the excellent and sumptuous dinners at the Chaulnes' Mansion, the beauty of the State apartments which daily increases, and of the fires in every chimney: this house, in fact, is the only one which truly represents the house of a great Lord. M. de Marsan and the Duc de Villeroi were at the dinner of the Chevalier de Lorraine.

As I have not heard Cardinal de Bouillon on the subject of the *prince dauphin,* I cannot answer to you for the truth of this circumstance; but it is affirmed that MONSIEUR, pressed by the Cardinal, had consented to detach the Dauphinial Principality of Auvergne, from the Duchy of Montpensier, in consideration of the pretensions which the house of Bouillon might have over the succession of MADEMOISELLE; so that by that means they were masters of the whole of Auvergne; for the Cardinal has the Duchy, and M. de Bouillon the Earldom; and, in the end, the Duc d'Albret would be called the *prince dauphin*: as the persuasion is, that there is nothing too warm for the Cardinal, who is occupied solely with the grandeur of his family, what is not said of this folly? It is true, that MONSIEUR, who had promised everything, spoke to the King respecting this division; and that the King opposed it [1]. It is

[1] After the imprisonment of the Princes, under the minority of Louis XIV., when the party of the great Condé decided to have recourse to arms, it was to Auvergne that the Princesse, his wife, immediately repaired. A curious detail of the magnificence with which she was received there by the Duc de Bouillon, of the forces he assembled, and of the sovereign power he exercised, may be found in the *Mémoires de Lenet.* The remembrance of such a circumstance was sufficient cause for the King to take umbrage at the new plan of the family of Bouillon, which is mentioned here.

said, that the Cardinal, still afflicted at this refusal, has written to the Chevalier de Lorraine, to tell him that he was much surprised that MONSIEUR had not kept his word with him, and that he could not henceforth be one of his servants. It is added, that the Chevalier de Lorraine has showed his letter to MONSIEUR, who has kept it, and says, that the Chevalier ought at least to be obliged to him for not having showed it to the King. Be this as it may, Madame, it is very disagreeable to our Cardinal; for as he is not universally beloved, his enemies take advantage of the opportunity to give vent to their malice, while his friends are grieved that he does not, once for all, put an end to his ambition, and accommodate himself to the present times. Judge, after this, of the success of the *boutrimé* which Madame de Coulanges has mentioned to you. It is a long time since I wrote to you; but I hear of you always by Madame de Coulanges, who sometimes has the goodness to communicate to me the contents of your letters. I always forget to give Madame de Louvois's compliments to you, and to the whole house of Grignan; she scolded me very seriously, the other day, for my omission.

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*LETTER 1034

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE COULANGES.

Grignan, February 26, 1695.

I should be consoled for the little secretary [1] you have lost, if the one [2] you had taken in his place, could attach himself entirely to your service. His writing is very good, his style excellent; but from the way in which I have heard him spoken of, I should think it probable that he would be every moment playing truant: he is a libertine; I even know that he sometimes sleeps in town; after this, my friend, you may employ him, if you please. I advise you to take him upon trial; when you find him under your

[1] The Comte de Sanzei.

[2] M. de Coulanges.

thumb, make him useful; *tant tenu, tant payé* (so much labour, so much pay). Our Chaulnes' Mansion is the only one that preserves the dignity of the nobility: they (the Duc and Duchesse de Chaulnes) are in the habit of enjoying their wealth; they both do what is now rarely done; they are worthy of the highest esteem and friendship. God preserve their health, the golden rain of St.-Malo, and the youth of your amanuensis: I must now address myself a little to him.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *now continues her letter to Monsieur* DE COULANGES.

In the first place, my dear cousin, I must tell you candidly, now that we are left at liberty, that I do not at all like Madame de Coulanges's diminutive sheets [1]; they enrage me, I quarrel with them every moment; I know not where I am. They are the leaves of the Sibyl, they fly away; and I cannot forgive them for keeping back, and interrupting, my friend's conversation; but you must say nothing to her about it, for she is attached to this small paper. I wish you were as much attached to her service: it is a good situation to be her amanuensis, I like it much; your writing has given me real pleasure. I know all the wonders of the house of Chaulnes, and am grieved not to be a witness of them: if I could have made an alteration in the arrangements which cause me to be here when they are at the Place Royale, I would have done it with pleasure. I love and honour Cardinal de Bouillon; you can praise him in prose and in verse; I wish his fancy, with respect to the succession of MADEMOISELLE, could have been realised. We are informed here of the magnificence of your Duchesse de Villeroi; of her superb dresses for the last days of the carnival: she is at the age to like all these things. Have you not given the compliments of this whole château to Maréchal de Villeroi and his lady? I requested you to do

[1] Madame de Coulanges generally wrote on small-sized paper, cut on every side.

so. We shall receive compliments from Madame de Louvois with extreme pleasure; she is a person whom I particularly respect: she is polite, she is obliging, and this is all I require of her. You have had the deplorable weather, and so have we: extreme cold, and volumes of snow, which I need not tell you; severe frosts upon the snow, and then more snow, and rain freezing at it fell: in short, we have been a thousand times worse off than at Paris. I conclude, my amiable; I have no pretty details to give scope to in this paper, and I would lay a wager the wind would carry away my letter; it is your turn to speak. Corbinelli tells me wonders of the excellent company of men he met at the house of Mademoiselle de Lenclos; thus she assembles both men and women in her old age, whatever Madame de Coulanges may say; but if she had now only women to visit her, she might comfort herself for the arrangement, having had visitors among the other sex at a different period.

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*LETTER 1035

From M. DE COULANGES TO *Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, Friday, March 4, 1695.

It appeared by the last letter you received from your friend [1], that her secretary was not always at her command. All you say on the libertinism of this secretary, is as incomparable as it is true. I only returned from the house of my *second wife* [2], where I had slept for two nights, on Wednesday morning; I returned to assist at the Wednesday's gala at the Chaulnes' Mansion. The Duc and Duchesse live well every day; but on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, I cannot sufficiently praise their good cheer: their house-steward is an excellent one, and contributes greatly to their splendour. But is the company always select? Judge, Madame, by the sample

[1] Madame de Coulanges.

[2] Madame de Louvois.

of last Wednesday: the *Divinities*, who are always amusing; Madame de La Salle, and her daughter de Roussillon; Madame de St.-Germain; Madame du Bois de La Roche, who laughs louder than ever; and the good Abbé d'Effiat, for whom principally the entertainment was given. I would have sworn, at first, that I should be contented to eat merely to live; but the dinner was so excellent, so large, and so magnificent, that I seasoned it with my best humour; I ate like a devil, drank like a fish, and made Madame de La Salle, her daughter, Madame de St.-Germain, and Madame du Bois de La Roche, agree with me, that there was nothing like a select company, from the same country, who all speak the same language, and who were all delighted to meet: they must also agree, I said, that anyone, be it who it may, that arrived unexpectedly, would be an interruption to our party; and they were of the opinion that the master and mistress of the house should be scrupulous of admitting any but such persons at their dinner-hour, and that nothing was so mortifying to good company as to meet with bad. Upon this subject, Madame de La Salle said a thousand clever things, every one more delicate and more truly French than the rest; Madame de St.-Germain applauded them with her usual air of confidence, and Madame du Bois de La Roche laughed louder than ever; the dirty spoons at the same time resounded upon the plates, to help one, and to help the other; and having unfortunately wished for a sea-dragon, Madame de St.-Germain put one of the finest on my plate: but it was in vain to say I would have no sauce; the same lady, assuring me that the sauce even surpassed the fish, covered it at different times with sauce from her own spoon, which was just taken from her lovely mouth; Madame de La Salle helped nothing but with her fingers; in short, I never met with so much dirt; and our good Duc, with the best intentions in the world, was dirtier than the rest. Thus, my lovely gouvernante, passed our entertainment. I am going again, as soon as I have finished this letter, to dine with the Duchesse de Chaulnes, for the Duc

will not arrive from Versailles till the evening: but the splendour of to-morrow is destined for the first President of Brittany, his son, his daughter-in-law, Madame Girardin, the Bishop of Vannes, his sister Madame de Creil, and others: I am also retained to assist in doing the honours.

Mademoiselle de Bréval [1] was married on Wednesday to M. de Thianges; and, as M. de Thianges heard some proposals for going to the opera till supper-time (for the marriage took place in the morning, and the dinner was at the Archbishop's of Paris), he requested that some other amusement might be chosen: accordingly the wedding-party was conducted by M. du Maine to the Arsenal, where the gates were shut, and the company played at *lansquenet* till the hour of supping with the first President arrived; at whose house the bride and bridegroom remained till to-day. They are now at the Nevers' Mansion, where they will remain for three months, that is, till they can find a house that suits them. Madame de Montespan opened her doors yesterday, and received, in bed, the compliments of all who wished to pay them to her. This is the great news of the day. The Duchesse de Villeroi is with child, and very melancholy at a situation which is new to her, while all her family are delighted at the event. The Comte de Sanzei arrived yesterday; he only waits the orders of Madame de Coulanges to show you his writing; he will be with us but a fortnight, at farthest, for the drum is going to beat again to arms. You have heard of the death of Madame de Montglas [2]: in return, the Comtesse de Fiesque is better than ever; she has been wonderful on the marriage of Mademoiselle de Bréval, whom she has always loved and considered as her daughter. Cardinal de Bouillon's affair is no longer spoken of; I have seen him frequently of late, and he appears to me as tranquil as it is

[1] Geneviève-Françoise de Harlay, daughter of Bonaventure-François de Harlay, Marquis de Bréval, and of Geneviève Fortia.

[2] This lady is known by the passion with which she had inspired Bussy, and by the complaints he wrote in prose and verse, reproaching her with having forsaken and even betrayed him in his misfortunes.

possible to be. The Chaulnes' Mansion, with all its glory, is not without its occasional mortifications, because the Duc and Duchesse are not without them: all these troops on the coast, and the officers that command them, embarrass them, when they ought to accommodate themselves to the times, spend the spring quietly here, and divide the summer between Chaulnes, Versailles, and Paris, and not go to Brittany till the meeting of the States: but they conceal everything from their friends, and will shorten their days by main force. The good Duc is very much out of spirits, and with reason; but who, in this world, does justice to himself?

This has insensibly grown into a tolerably long letter; it is, at least, written on old-fashioned paper, which does not fly away like your friend's. This friend of yours set out early this morning, to attend Father Gaillard's sermon at St.-Roch, and from thence she is to go to Madame de Valentiné's to dinner. Adieu, my dearest Madame; continue to love me, and believe that I love you neither more nor less than myself. The Marquise de La Trousse is going to join our society again; she has desired Madame de Coulanges to introduce her in certain houses; she intends also to write to you. Say, I entreat you, a thousand fine and good things for me to all the inhabitants of your château royal. I am very impatient to hear good news from the adorable Pauline: we hope to have some from you, independently of what we may receive from other quarters. We merit this distinction, from the sincere interest we take in all that regards her.

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*LETTER 1036

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, March 25, 1695.

My secretaries fail me in time of need; but when it is to you, my dear friend, I write, my fingers are always disposed to the office, *"they move only for Climène."* What

say you at the Duc de Chaulnes being no longer Governor of Brittany? Nothing is talked of but this great event; moderate persons think this Duc and Duchesse ought to consider themselves fortunate in the change [1]; others think they must be in despair at it; for myself, I say whatever they wish, and am convinced that we must not judge of our friends' way of thinking by our own: this, however, is a fault which the world always falls into, and which it is impossible to avoid; it is less trouble to judge by our own dispositions than to examine those of others. M. de Chaulnes carries it off well; the Duchesse conceals herself so carefully, that I have not seen her; it is indeed easy enough to escape me, for I am naturally slow; and I make less speed than ever, in the hope of advancing in the road of perfect indifference, which you, my dear, will never be able to perceive. Besides, my health is not at all good; it is of more consequence than ever that I should go to Bourbon; the will of God must be done. When I reflect that ten or twelve years, more or less, make the only difference in this affair, I do not think it worth while to treat it so seriously; perhaps, when I find myself nearer death, I shall think otherwise; we must deal plainly with the name, if it be only to accustom ourselves to it.

I expect a compliment from you, which I am sure will be a sincere one, on the event of the fire: this seemed to be an opportunity for bringing the whole world to me; but the world is frivolous, I have carefully avoided it.

Madame de Villars has made me promise that I would say a thousand things to you from her; and particularly that I would inform you that she will not forgive M. de Villars for not having spoken of her to Madame de Grignan; this may lead to a separation, if your daughter does not take care to prevent it. Now I am finishing my letter, one of my secretaries is arrived; he will inform you that I have just seen M. de Chaulnes, who has related to me all that passed between the King and him; but as he has told

[1] The government of Brittany was given to the late Comte de Toulouse, and that of Guyenne to the Duc de Chaulnes.

me, at the same time, that he is going to write to you, I shall not embark in a recital which you will learn much better from himself; this appears to me very reasonable. The Duchesse has sent to ask if she might spend the day with me; I pity her, because she is grieved: I, who have no taste for representation, or rather who have no taste but for rest when youth is past, should not complain if I were in Madame de Chaulnes's place. M. de Mêmes is to marry Mademoiselle de Brou, who is to receive a portion of three hundred and fifty thousand francs in silver, and fifty thousand in clothes and jewels. It is also said, that M. de Poissi is to marry Mademoiselle de Bosmelet[1], who will some day have an income of sixty thousand livres a year; *and of my poor niece not a word.* M. de Coulanges arrived yesterday from St.-Martin's, and he is gone to-day, I know not where. Maréchal de Choiseul set out on Sunday; he has the command of Brittany added to the rest: as he has so noble a command, I am not sorry that he is at a distance; not that I am ungrateful, for I have scarcely seen him this year. Adieu, my true friend; let me not be forgotten at Grignan, especially by the adorable Pauline.

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*LETTER 1037

From M. DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, April 15, 1695.

I have not written to you since the strange adventure of our fire, and it is a long time ago: I ask you a thousand pardons, most excellent lady; but you must excuse a man who is never at home, and whose mind is always on the stretch, as I formerly said to your son, who was reproaching me for the same thing. As soon as I had shared in the disaster of our poor furniture, I returned to Versailles, and from thence to Pontoise, whence I returned merely to pass the Easter fortnight at Bâville; but I have received a

[1] M. de Poissi did not marry Mademoiselle, and it was not till 1698 that he espoused Mademoiselle de Varangeville.

hint to hold myself in readiness to go to Chaulnes towards the twenty-fourth or twenty-fifth of the month, to remain there till Whitsuntide. I doubt not that some one or other will lay hands on me in the interval; and it is thus my days pass insensibly, and that I take advantage of an aftercrop of youth, which makes me accommodate myself still to the world, and the world accommodate itself still to me. I know not what is become of the gout, I have not heard of it since last year; and my strength, and my health, and my good humour, are so completely returned, that I am almost ready to believe there must be a gross error in the certificate of my baptism, and that the register must have been wrong by at least twenty years; for certainly, at the age of sixty-one, no one is so young as I am. You are young too, my dearest; I have never seen a firmer hand than yours, nor a more exquisite style; your letters give me real pleasure; Madame de Coulanges carefully preserves for me all those you write to her, and I should never be tired of perusing them.

You have known, and have seen with a telescope, all that has taken place at the Chaulnes' Mansion; the more we look forward, the more fortunate the zealous friends and servants of the Duc and Duchesse think them in having got out of the scrape so nobly as they have done: in short, they are the greatest Lords in France, their affairs are in the best train, and they have the pleasure of hearing their praises sung on all sides; for from Brittany we hear that they have assisted many persons at their own expense, when too severe rules have been exacted by the States, to keep back the little *douceurs* which maintained many decayed gentlemen and poor families. In short, our Duc and Duchesse are excellent people, God bless them; but let them beware of going into Guyenne from uneasiness, for if they go they are lost. No offense will be given if they stay away; but if they once go, they must remain there for ever; and what expenses must they incur, and what spirits will they have to govern!

There is no great news stirring. The Archbishop of

Rheims thought to have purchased the Colbert Mansion; and M. de Beauvilliers, first tutor of the children, and authorised by the consent of the Archbishop of Rouen and Madame de Seignelai, thought to have sold it; but the latter having changed their mind, M. de Beauvilliers and M. de Rheims, whose conduct has been irreproachable, have been disappointed. These are the only things talked of, according to the interest that is taken by either party. I was with Madame de Nevers the whole of yesterday morning, and I returned to her again in the evening: this is to show you that I have not forsaken her; but, for all this, it is certain that we see less of her than of any other person, because the life she and her husband lead is still the most retired, and even the most extraordinary.

My much beloved gouvernante, adieu. I am going to dine at the Chaulnes' Mansion, where the noble Duchesse will arrive after dinner. I am not satisfied with the health of Madame de Coulanges: she is now deep in the medicines of Helvetius; God grant that they may be of more service to her than those of Saint-Donnat and Carette. I do not like to see her running from quack to quack; she appears to me like a person who has lost her way, who seeks the right road and is unable to find it. Keep yourself well, my lovely: it is certain that I am less uneasy about you at Grignan, than if you were here; because I know that you want for nothing where you are, and that you have everything there which you like best. I see M. de Sévigné as often as I can; he is still my child.

The incendiary was called *Beauvais*, a waiting-maid whom Madame de Coulanges had lately taken in the place of the *Belle de nuit*; this woman displeased her from the moment she came into her service; she was also hated by the whole house; but your friend had never the courage to get rid of her, because she was recommended by a darling penitent of Father Gaillard.

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*LETTER 1038

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to M.* DE COULANGES.

Grignan, April 26, 1695.

When you write to me, my good cousin, I am delighted; your letters are as agreeable as yourself; they are read with a feeling of pleasure that diffuses itself over everything; we love to hear you, we approve, we admire you, everyone according to the degree of love he bears you. When you do not write to me, I neither scold nor pout; "My cousin, I say, is in some Enchanted Palace; my cousin is not at home; my poor cousin is no doubt run away with;" and I wait with patience the return of your remembrance, without ever doubting your friendship; for how is it possible not to love you? It was the first thing you effected when you began to open your eyes; and it was I who set the fashion of loving you, and thinking you worthy of being loved: so well-conditioned a friendship has nothing to fear from the injustice of time. It appears to us as if time, who does so much harm in passing over the heads of others, had done no injury to you: you know nothing of your register; you are convinced there is a great error in the date of the year; the Chevalier de Grignan says, that what has been taken from yours, has been added to his; and he is right: it is thus his age must be calculated. For myself, who have yet no warning of the number of my years, I am sometimes surprised at my health: I am cured of a thousand little indispositions I formerly laboured under; not only do I advance slowly, like a tortoise, but I am almost tempted to believe that I move like a crab: I endeavour, however, not to be the dupe of these deceitful appearances, and in a few years I shall advise you to do the same [1].

You are at Chaulnes, my dear cousin; it is an enchanted spot, of which M. and Madame de Chaulnes are

[1] Within a year she was no more!

going to take possession; you will there find the children of the little nightingales whom you have so prettily celebrated in your songs; they ought to redouble theirs, when they learn from you the happiness they will have in seeing the owners of this beautiful place more frequently. I have followed every sentiment of these good Governors, and I have not found one which has not been in its place, and which has not taken its rise in good sense and the most perfect generosity. They have felt the lively grief of a whole Province, which they have governed and loaded with blessings for twenty-six years: they have obeyed, however, most nobly; they had need of their courage to subdue the force of habit, which had, as it were, united them to Brittany; now they have other thoughts: they enter into the taste of quietly enjoying their greatness; I find nothing that is not praise-worthy in the whole of this conduct; I have traced it, and felt it with the interest and attention of a person who loves and honours them from the bottom of her heart. I have informed our Duchesse how M. de Grignan stands at Marseilles, and in this Province, without any sort of dissatisfaction; on the contrary, it appears by the orders of Maréchal de Tourville, that he has been considered in every thing: the Maréchal is to ask him for troops when he wants them; and M. de Grignan, as Lieutenant of the army, will command the Marine forces under the Maréchal. This is the principal concern in this world: we wish to act, cost what it will. I pity my son for having lost the pleasure of paying his respects to our ancient Governors; he feels this loss as he ought to feel it. I am uneasy respecting Madame de Coulanges, and am going to write to her. Receive the friendship of all who are here; and come, that I may kiss both your cheeks.

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*LETTER 1039

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, May 13, 1695.

I am much better; Helvetius [1] has given me only an extract of wormwood, which seems to have restored my stomach: I assure you, my dear, that I am far from being indifferent to my health, and that I bear my pain with very little patience; I will not, therefore, take to myself a merit which I do not possess. I believe that, if I had thought of spending the interval between the seasons for taking the waters, at Grignan, I should have considered them necessary to my health; and I think that if I had once got there, I should have preferred the wines of Grignan to those of Bourbon. I very much pity the Chevalier de Grignan; and I am ashamed of complaining of the little pain I suffer, when I see him endure such torture with so much patience. Poor Madame de Kerman is very ill; we shall see the end of her life, before the end of her patience.

Good heavens! let me hasten to give you compliments from M. de Tréville; he scolds me every day for having forgotten it; he sincerely wishes for your return. He told us, the day before yesterday, the finest things possible on the subject of *Quietism,* that is, by explaining it to us;

[1] He was the grand-father of the celebrated author *de l'Esprit.* He came from Holland to Paris very young, to practise medicine. Chance, and not his merit, though he had considerable merit, made his fortune. He attended and cured a drug-merchant, who paid him with a packet of the root of Brazil called ipecacuanha. After some experiments in the hospitals, Helvetius found that it possessed the virtue of curing the bloody flux. The public soon learned by his success that his specific was really sovereign; and, before the end of thirty-two years, dysenteries had brought him in a hundred thousand crowns. The King gave him a thousand louis for his secret. His talents, from that time fully proved, acquired him great fame, which equalled that of his son, who was also a skillful physician. Both have enriched their profession with valuable works. But the genius of philosophy has since raised the name to a higher degree of glory.

never was there so enlightened a mind as his. M. Duguet[1], who is not much of a fool, as you well know, upon such subjects, was in raptures at hearing him. Let us talk of other things. The Princesses are here, and amuse themselves so well that we are assured they are not at all impatient to return to Court. They go to bed commonly towards eleven o'clock in the morning, or at noon. Langlée gave a supper yesterday to M. and Madame de Chartres, the Princesse, the Duchesse, who was the Queen of the feast, Madame de Montespan, a great number of other ladies, among whom were Madame (*la Maréchale*) de Villeroi, and the Duchesse de Villeroi; the Duc, and all the Princes who are in town, were also there. But there was another entertainment given, two days ago, by the Duc, in Madame de La Sablière's cottage: all the Princes and Princesses were present; this house is become a little Palace of Crystal. Do you not find that these are holy places to infidels[2]? Madame de Montespan has just purchased Petit-Bourg for forty thousand crowns; she gives it, after her death, to M. d'Antin. M. de Sévigné leaves us the day after to-morrow; he assures me that he will meet you this winter at Paris; this makes the winter appear very long to me, notwithstanding the beauty of the season. M. de Chaulnes will return the seventeenth of this month, but our Duchesse not till after the holidays. M. de Coulanges sends me word that the more spring he has, the more he feels the spring: this is a great wonder; for, without offence to him, he has more spring than Madame de Brégi. I entreat you, my dear, to say a thousand things from me to Madame de Grignan, and to embrace the gentle Pauline very affectionately for me: it is said that you will bring her back married; I already feel that I shall not love her the less. M. de Luxembourg's Funeral Oration will be ready for printing in two days: it is said that a few features have been taken away from the portrait of the Prince

[1] The celebrated Abbé Duguet.

[2] On account of the extreme devotion of M. de La Sablière, to whom this house formerly belonged.

of Orange[1]. Madame de Grignan will have the pleasure of receiving affectionate letters from her husband, and of writing some to him: it is right that all her sentiments for him should develop themselves. Adieu, my dear.

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*LETTER 1040

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Monsieur* DE COULANGES.

Grignan, May 28, 1695.

I have received your two letters from Chaulnes, my dear cousin; we found some verses in them that delighted us; we have sung them with extreme pleasure, and more than one person will tell you so, for you must not be ignorant of the good taste we preserve here for everything you do. With respect to the gaiety and charms of your mind, you certainly advance, and go back with respect to your register: this is all that can be wished, and is what naturally lays the foundation of the desire everyone has for your society. To whom are you not welcome? with whom do you not accommodate yourself? and then, which is best of all, your conduct in not obtruding yourself, and in allowing room to the wish of seeing you, gives the true relish to your vanity. The proverb must be forcible indeed, if it be true that you are not a prophet in your own country. I often receive news from Madame de Coulanges: her correspondence is very entertaining, and her health ought no longer to create alarm, especially having the resource which we must have, that when she is tired of medicine, and undeceived with respect to it, the most salutary remedy will be to take no more.

But to return to Chaulnes. I know its beauty, and can discern from hence how dull our good Governor is there. It is in vain for you to give the best reasons in the

[1] The Court began to feel that the Prince of Orange was not a despicable enemy, and peace was already thought of, which took place two years afterwards. The Jesuit La Rue, author of this Funeral Oration, had orders to soften the war of words, expecting that something better would happen.

world; he will constantly answer, "I do not know:" and if you go on, he will silence you by saying, "I shall die." This is what will happen, no doubt, till he has acquired a taste for repose, and for the charms of a quiet life: habits are too strong, and the agitation attached to command and to a high station has made too deep an impression, to be easily effaced. I wrote to this Duc upon the deputation of my son, and I jested with him, saying things I did not believe respecting his solitude at Chaulnes; I treated him like a true hermit, holding conversations with the beautiful fountain called *the solitary*. I supposed his repasts suited to his situation, and that dates and wild fruits would compose all his banquets; I pitied his house-steward, and in saying all these trifles, I found that I stood in great need of you; and that the braying [1] I know him to possess, would make strange work with my poor letter. You came to my assistance, as I supposed you would; and you are now in another country, where you feel all the delight of paternal love; what say you? you could not have believed it to be so strong, if you had not experienced it: it would have been great pity if all the good instructions you have given to little children, had not been followed by some child of your imagination. The little Comte de Nicei is a master-piece [2], and the singularity of being invisible makes him superior to the rest. You make so good a use of this story, that I scarcely dare recall you: you have immortalized it; nothing can be prettier than these couplets, we sing them with pleasure. We have had a delightful introduction of spring; but, for two days past, the rain, which we do not like here, has been as violent as in Brittany and Paris, so that we have been accused of having brought it into fashion; it interrupts our walks, but it does not silence our nightingales; in short, my dear cousin, our days pass too quickly. We dispense with great bustle, and with the great world; our society, however, would not

[1] M. de Chaulnes read as ill as M. de Coulanges read well.

[2] The whole of this pleasantry is explained in some songs of M. de Coulanges to Madame de Louvois, and turns upon a story which had come to them from Provence.

displease you; and if ever a puff of wind should blow you to this *royal* château—. But this is a chimera, we must hope to see you again elsewhere in a more natural and probable situation; we have yet a summer before us for writing to each other.

The marriage of M. de Lauzun has surprised us [1]; I should never have guessed it on the day I wrote to you respecting another marriage [2], when you were at Lyons: Madame de Coulanges remembers it still. Everyone here loves you, and thanks you for your remembrance. I write to you imprudently, without considering that you are no longer at Chaulnes, and that in another country all this will be nothing. I must conclude with Pauline; she sings your praises in singing your songs; she still loves you, and desires you to give her acknowledgments to the Duchesse de Villeroi; it is impossible to forget a pretty friend. Adieu, cousin; you know how much I am yours.

Madame DE GRIGNAN *adds a Postscript to her Mother's letter to Monsieur* DE COULANGES.

All your children are charming; those we see, bear away the palm from those we do not see; and however perfect the Comte de Nicei may be, from whom you seem to take your Benjamin, we cannot believe that he surpasses the pretty children you send us, and which we sing with so much pleasure. I cannot believe that in all your works anything can equal the idea of converting to use "Do you see him?" "no;" "no more do I." As the original of this story is Provençal, you owe me a tribute for everything you compose from this model, of which the copies very much exceed it. I see with pleasure in your letters to my mother, the remembrance you retain of our *Rock*; the epithets with which you honour it [3], are eternal monuments

[1] To Mademoiselle de Lorges. This marriage was an arrangement made by ambition. With a large fortune and high rank, Lauzun's mania was to become a favourite once more. He could not succeed.

[2] That is, when the marriage of Lauzun to MADEMOISELLE was spoken of. See Letter 53, of December 15th, 1670, in the first volume.

[3] The Royal Château.

of glory to the Adhémars; if their château merits in your opinion to rank with all the superb, magnificent, and singular ones you have seen, no panegyric can be so great as this. It is more beautiful than you have ever beheld it; and if we had the hope of seeing you in it again, we should wish for nothing more.

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*LETTER 1041

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, June 3, 1695.

How are you, my dear? I have not heard from you since the letter you caused to be written to me by your handsome secretary. I fear you have injured your charming health by medicine. I saw M. de Chaulnes yesterday, who is a perfect courtier: he has been ten days at Marly, where he spent his time playing at chess with Cardinal d'Estrées, and when he was told that it was news here, he replied that he was surprised at it, because he had long sought to give himself check-mate. Another piece of news is, that Madame de Louvois has given up Meudon to the King, who has taken it for MONSEIGNEUR, giving Madame de Louvois four hundred thousand francs and the charming house of Choisy, which was what she most wished for; I fear she can have no more desires to gratify. She is very much dissatisfied with M. de Coulanges, who, on arriving from Chaulnes, set out the next day for Pontoise. For myself, I have no taste but for rest. I have been desired to go to Cardinal de Bouillon's this week; this seemed to me exactly like asking me to walk to Rome; I find I must have cogent reasons to be induced to quit my bed; be assured it is ill health which makes me think thus: I am, however, much better than I was. I am not satisfied with that of Madame de Chaulnes; she has a wretched cold, which I do not at all like. I believe the sale of Ménilmontant is broken off, so much so that, from all appearances, the first President will not now part with it. Adieu,

my dear: let me not be forgotten at Grignan, I entreat you, and tell the beautiful Pauline to think sometimes how much I love her.

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*LETTER 1042

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the President* DE MOULCEAU.

Grignan, June 5, 1695.

I intend, Sir, to bring an action against you: and thus I set about it. I wish you to judge it yourself. I have been here for more than a year with my daughter, for whom I have as much love as ever. Since that time you have no doubt heard of the marriage of the Marquis de Grignan to Mademoiselle de Saint-Amand. You have seen her often enough at Montpellier to be acquainted with her person; you have also heard mention of the vast wealth of her father. You are not ignorant that this marriage was solemnised with great pomp in the Castle which you know. I suppose you cannot have forgotten the time when the true esteem we have always preserved for you began. On this subject, I measure your sentiments by my own, and I judge that, we not having forgotten you, you cannot have forgotten us.

I even include M. de Grignan, whose date is still more ancient than ours. I collect all these things, and I find myself injured on every side; I complain of it here, I complain of it to our friends, I complain of it to our dear Corbinelli, the jealous confidant and witness of all the esteem and friendship we bear you; and at length, Sir, I complain of it to yourself. Whence proceeds this silence? is it from forgetfulness? from perfect indifference? I know not which to say: what would you have me think? What does your conduct resemble? Give a name to it, Sir; the cause is now ready for your sentence. Pass it: I consent that you should be both party and judge.

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*LETTER 1043

From M. DE COULANGES *to Mesdames* DE SÉVIGNÉ *and* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, June 10, 1695.

Your last delightful letter fell into the midst of Saint-Martin's; and as it was not closed against my charming Cardinal, who has taken the place of, and gone beyond, the charming Marquis, it furnished ample materials for talking of the mother and daughter, and for discoursing again of the Royal Château, and of the good and magnificent reception you there gave this Cardinal on his return from Rome. In speaking of you, Madame, how often did we wish you at Saint-Martin's! We even placed you in a superb calèche, that we might show you the walks and all the beauties of the country with greater convenience; but alas! it was in vain we asked, *do you see them? no,* was the reply, and we added mournfully, *no more do we.* We gave you also a very good supper; and it was at supper, in the enthusiasm of veal, beef, and mutton, which were in the highest degree of excellence, that I wrote this triolet, which I thought obtained your approbation.

No, ladies, there is no life like that we lead at Saint-

Quel veau! quel bœuf! et quel mouton!
La bonne et tendre compagnie!
Chantons à jamais sur ce nom:
Quel veau! quel bœuf! et quel mouton!
Rôti, soyez exquis et blond,
Mais mon appétit vous oublie;
Quel veau! quel bœuf! et quel mouton!
La bonne et tendre compagnie! [1]

[1] What beef! what mutton! and what veal!
O rare and noble company!
Loudly our praises let us deal;
What beef! what mutton! and what veal!
Roast meat! so exquisite a meal
I ne'er did eat in Brittany;
What beef! what mutton! and what veal!
O rare and noble company! [Translation.]

Martin's; and we must really and truly see you there some day; I shall return there to-morrow to receive our Duc and Duchesse de Chaulnes on Sunday, who are to bring Madame de Coulanges and the Abbé Têtu with them. The Cardinal has long desired Madame de Coulanges to come, and I have also long wished her to see Saint-Martin's, and to see me at Saint-Martin's; for she will there find my elbows at liberty, as they say, and so perfectly at liberty, that she will have an idea of how much I am beloved in this house, and, if I may say so, held in estimation from the turnspit to the master. I cannot, indeed, sufficiently praise the Cardinal; there is no friendly attention he does not show me, and no confidence he does not feel in me. Even his whole family is become mine; I am there indiscriminately on all occasions, and I am on the eve of going to Evreux with the same freedom, and the same pleasure, that I go to Pontoise: in short, I may say there never was a happier life than mine: God grant that the life to come may be equally so! I must here finish the avowal I have made to you of my extreme felicity.

While I was at St.-Martin's, the exchange took place of Meudon for Choisy and four hundred thousand francs; this obliged me to return here, to prove to Madame de Louvois the lively interest I take in all that concerns her. I found her very much pleased, and highly satisfied with the beautiful present she has made the King. I went with her the day before yesterday to Versailles; the King received her at Madame de Maintenon's. His Majesty loaded her with civilities, and she had the courage to answer him, by saying, that she was delighted at having had anything in her possession by which she could testify her respect and gratitude to him; that she had always considered Meudon as a house which was destined for him, and that it was with this view alone she had taken so much pains to keep it in good repair, and to restore it so to him whenever he pleased to have it; that she knew the intentions of the late M. de Louvois, whose design, if God had spared his life for him to have explained himself, was to

have made a present of it to His Majesty. The King said wonders; she afterwards saw MONSEIGNEUR, who thanked her for her noble present; in short, the whole scene passed off admirably, and we are now occupied in removing our furniture from Meudon to Choisy, and in securing to ourselves our four hundred thousand francs, of which some small portion ought to come *to the little Comte de Nicei*; but, with all Madame de Louvois's affection for me, the beautiful eyes of her casket will always dazzle hers in such a manner, that she will never see, *no more shall I*, the little presents she might make me. I have always said, I am born for superfluity and not for necessity: I must content myself, and die happy in the midst of indigence.

I was delighted, my adorable Comtesse, with the sacred characters with which you have honoured me. I thank you for receiving so well, as you assure me you do, all I say to your mother respecting yourself and your Royal Château, and I entreat you to persevere; for I certainly merit some acknowledgment for all the tender and respectful sentiments I feel for you, and all that surrounds you; would to God that a puff of wind would blow me once more towards Donzère! I well know where I should go; I doubt not that this Royal Château is improving daily in beauty, and that my taste will, in every respect, be more satisfied than ever: but it is much more probable that a puff of wind will blow you to these shores, and in this case, I will show you, whenever you please, my houses at Chaulnes, Saint-Martin's, and Choisy, which you will not dislike. I am going again to Saint-Martin's for a week, after which I shall return to Choisy, to arrange, and plan, and replan, from morning till night; it is only on this condition that Madame de Louvois will suffer me to go: of the four days that I have been here, I have slept two nights at her house; in short, the house where I am the least, is Madame de Coulanges's, who has her merit also. I am delighted that you approve my verses: I send you some more. I am going to dine at the Chaulnes' Mansion; its owners returned last evening from Versailles. The Duc still flat-

ters himself that he shall have Ménil-montant, and the Duchesse still opposes it; your friend is not always very reasonable, but I sing my couplets aloud with the freedom God has given me, in spite of her grimaces. I am going to see how the business proceeds, and to drink your health, adorable mother, daughter, and grand-daughter. M. de Vendôme is going to command in Catalonia, and M. de Noailles is coming back to have his portrait finished by Rigaud. The Duchesse de Villeroi sends a thousand remembrances to the lovely Pauline, upon a new score. You cannot imagine how much a pregnancy of four months and a half becomes this Duchesse.

Adieu, my charming gouvernante; read my letter with all its points and commas, as a reward for the good emphasis I give to yours.

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*LETTER 1044

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Monsieur* DE COULANGES.

Grignan, June 19, 1695.

I have been very much grieved at Madame de Coulanges's colic; I advise her to apply to Carette, or to go to Vichy; we must not let such dangerous and painful disorders take possession of our poor frames. If we may pass from so melancholy a subject to a trifle which you sent Pauline, I must tell you, that we have felt all the point of it; it appeared to us as if Madame Cornuel was raised from the dead, or that she had sent it from the other world. For my own part, I would congratulate M. de Poissi very sincerely upon the subject, if I had only had the honour of seeing him twice in my life; but he may be assured of our secret admiration. *Ah! masks, I know you,* on seeing certain persons enter who were announced by great titles. Why did not this natural and simple idea occur a thousand times to me, who mortally hate great titles upon little subjects? I admire the humility of those who wish to bear them; they would refuse them, if they

had the wit to reflect on what the explanation of these fine names costs them; and how terribly it outrages their poor humble names, which would not be thought of, if they did not wish to assume the feathers of the peacock, which so ill become them. I hope this saying will in future prevent this sort of usurpation, and that it may correct it, as Molière has corrected so many follies; God grant it, and that everyone may tremble lest he should be addressed with, *Mask, I know you*! You cannot doubt, my dear cousin, that we have received with your letter all the prepossession which it has appeared to us you have for this saying, which I entreat you to place at the head of M. du Bellay's collection. I would tell you one of this country, but it would be lost upon you; I keep it till we have forgotten the one in question; that is to say, never.

Yes, child, I am in this chamber, in this beautiful sanctum, where you have seen me, surrounded with such beautiful prospects. M. de Grignan is gone to take a trip towards the coast; his absence will be felt by us: we expect M. de Carcassonne here, in two or three days. If you were to write a few lines to the Archbishop of Arles on his resurrection, in the style of an *hallelujah,* it seems to me as if you would please him highly; he is very much alive to the joy of being returned from so great a distance, never having been at such a feast. You are greatly beloved by all the inhabitants of this Castle: you know how we live here; what good cheer, what society, what liberty we enjoy; the days pass too quickly; and this it is that destroys me on every side. If you go to Vichy, you cannot dispense with coming to Grignan. I am tempted to request you to give a thousand respectful compliments to Madame de Villeroi: you are fortunate in being often with this amiable lady. Pauline thinks you are also very much so, in seeing her daughter-in-law (the Duchesse) still; she has received her letter with great pleasure, and conjures you to continue her in the friendship of this Duchesse, of yourself, and of Madame de Coulanges.

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*LETTER 1045

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, June 20, 1695.

You are now enjoying the beauties of the country, my dear; spring appears in all its glory. I am going to be guilty of great excess, for I calculate upon setting out on Sunday for St.-Martin's, with M. and Madame de Chaulnes, and to spend three days there; the pleasure I expect will be interrupted by ill health: I am arrived to such a degree of delicacy, that the sight of a good dinner makes me sick; I am therefore intimidated, and in this state the most trifling things appear considerable to me. Madame de Louvois went yesterday to return thanks to the King: he gave her a private audience at Madame de Maintenon's; she feels more than ever the happiness of having got rid of Meudon. The King has gone to Trianon, where he will remain till the journey to Fontainebleau. I believe I sent you word, that M. de Montchevreuil is about to marry his son to the cousine-germaine of Madame de Lorges, a little person whom you have often seen with her: she is to have three hundred and eighty thousand livres. It was you who informed me, that M. de Vendôme is to command in Catalonia, and that M. de Noailles is returning home ill. M. de Coulanges has more affairs upon his hands than ever, and all of equal importance; but they are pleasant when they make him happy; that is of the most consequence. I thought the couplets of *Comte de Nicei* very pretty; it is an amiable child: no one, therefore, leaves more agreeable ideas than he does in his absence; this little Comte will attain to immortality. Like you, my friend, I have marked the time of our poor Madame de La Fayette's death. Madame de Caylus amuses herself wonderfully at her own house; the Court does not appear to her a place of pleasure: she does not quit Madame de Leuville an instant, who gives the prettiest sup-

pers possible every evening. I do not think the purchase of Ménil-montant hopeless; and, no offence to Madame de Chaulnes, it would be the best acquisition M. de Chaulnes could make. Madame d'Humières (*la Maréchale*) has retired to the Carmelites; she has let the house of the late Mademoiselle de Porte: she entirely governs the Faubourg St.-Jacques; and, what is still more wonderful, Father de La Tour [1] governs her. You know that M. de Lauzun has Maréchal d'Humières's apartment at Versailles; he has bespoken for his wife a diamond necklace, that will cost two hundred thousand francs. Adieu, my dear friend; I wish for your return much more than I expect it; I beg you to say innumerable things for me to Madame de Grignan: tell the amiable Pauline, not to reduce me to the extremity of loving one who is ungrateful. Madame de Mesmes makes her appearance in a coach worth a thousand louis. Read the genealogy of Feydeau in the *Mercure Galant,* and you will see that it is the only noble and illustrious house in the world, and that the late Grand-Master [2] deceived himself when he supposed he derived any portion of his splendour from another quarter.

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*LETTER 1046

From M. DE COULANGES *to Mesdames* DE SÉVIGNÉ *and* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, June 22, 1695.

I arrived from Saint-Martin's the day before yesterday; the whole of yesterday I passed at Choisy; I am going to sleep at Versailles, to be ready to set off to-morrow morning to Evreux with all the Bouillons in the world; who begin to love me after the example of the Cardinal, and wish to have me in their turn. And now say, ladies,

[1] No doubt, because this Father was a Jesuit, whereas the Faubourg was occupied by Jansenists.

[2] The Duc du Lude.

if you can, that your little cousin is not a man of consequence! You have further to learn, that I cannot go to one place without, "Mercy on me!" being cried in another; for Madame de Louvois was yesterday in so terrible a rage at my leaving her again for six or seven days, and reproached me so affectionately, that I was on the point of sacrificing to her my journey to Evreux; but I showed her such civil, affecting, and threatening letters from M. and Mademoiselle de Bouillon, that at length she yielded, on condition that, on my return, I would not leave her a moment, to knock and knock at Choisy from morning till night. I must, notwithstanding, give a little portion of my time to Saint-Martin's; for Madame de Chaulnes, who is determined to kill herself at any rate, by the many torments she heaps upon herself without rhyme or reason, was not able to go there last week, as she had fixed with Madame de Coulanges, to whom the Cardinal wishes to show how much I am master of this delightful place, and how little, when I am there, he is thought of. This journey is only deferred, and my vanity will take care to renew the subject as soon as the health of the Duchesse will permit. This is a great thorn out of my side; for the affair of Ménil-montant has failed a second time: you may suppose that the difficulty rests with the first President, whose character it is to start objections to everything. As I have not seen M. de Chaulnes since I have been here, from his extreme love of Versailles, I am not acquainted with the particulars of the rupture of this bargain; but I shall know them soon; for the King is going to Marly for a week, when the Duc will dine at Paris, and I intend to dine with him to bid him adieu, and to see how the noble Duchesse is; who has selected for a nurse, in preference to every other person, Madame de Saint-Germain, with a distaff at her side and the spindle in her hand. I have just spent the pleasantest time in the world at Saint-Martin's; M. de Chaulnes came there to see us with Madame de Guénégaud. You ask, ladies, for all the follies which, *"Do you see him?" "No." "No more do I,"* have produced. I send

you all the new ones, and the last I shall write; that this pleasantry, which would become bad in the end, may not be pushed too far. Cardinal de Bouillon, to soften the destiny of his nieces, who are in convents (at least the two youngest, for the eldest is at Court), has taken them to Saint-Martin's, and takes charge much more willingly of Mademoiselle d'Albret than of Mademoiselle de Château-Thierry, so that we call the little d'Albret *Madame de Saint-Martin,* and it is she who does the honours; but at this very time she prefers, to the Port-Royal of Paris, a convent at Pontoise, where she remains during the short stay her uncle is obliged to make at Versailles and at Marly; and she is accordingly at Pontoise now, the Cardinal being at Versailles to-day, to accompany His Majesty to Marly. But let us return to our fold: M. de Chaulnes was making himself familiar with little d'Albret; he thought her handsome, and could not even forbear telling her so; and I advised him to propose to her to be his daughter-in-law[1]: "Would to God!" said the Cardinal. "Would to God!" said M. de Chaulnes. But alas! do you see this husband, this Duc de Pecquigny, this only son? *No. No more do I*; and we laughed heartily. M. de Chaulnes went to Paris; and I wrote the following lines, which I sent to him the next day; they are also to the tune of *Joconde*:

La belle d'Albret pour certain
  Dans deux jours se marie;
Tout se prépare à Saint-Martin
  Pour la cérémonie.
Elle épouse un joli garçon
  Fait comme une peinture;
Le voyez-vous? vous dites, non:
  Ni moi, je vous le jure.

Il est fils d'un fort grand seigneur,
  Homme de conséquence;
Trois fois à Rome ambassadeur,
  Et duc et pair de France.
Son épouse dans Trianon
  Fera bonne figure;
Le voyez-vous? vous dites, non:
  Ni moi, je vous le jure.

[1] The jest consists in M. de Chaulnes having no children.

Le petit Comte de Nicé,
  Qui bien loin d'être bête,
Pour son âge est fort avancé,
  Doit venir à la fête.
Il y brillera, ce dit-on,
  D'une riche parure;
Le voyez-vous? vous dites, non:
  Ni moi, je vous le jure.

On dit déja que dans un an
  La nouvelle Duchesse
Pourra nous donner un enfant
  Digne de sa noblesse.
Qu'il sera joli, ce poupon!
  L'aimable créature!
Le verrez-vous? je crois que non:
  Ni moi, je vous le jure.

Que Chaulnes sera satisfait
  De voir sa belle-fille
D'un rejeton aussi parfait
  Augmenter sa famille!
Mais tout ceci n'est que chanson
  Et que pure chimère;
Nous ne voyons rien tout de bon,
  Et je m'en désespère [1].

Well! what say you to this? the jest is now ended; I repeat it to you.

I found Madame de Coulanges here, in a very charming state of health; she is even grown fat, which is a very good sign. I shall not tell you much public news, for I know none. Madame de Créqui (*la Maréchale*) has been near death; but she is out of danger. Adieu, ladies; adorable mother and daughter, adieu; adieu, beautiful Pauline. I am delighted, as you may suppose, that M. de Grignan has been treated with all the distinctions he merits: but is it true, that the enemy's fleet was before Marseilles, with an intention to bombard it? What an eternal and unfor-

[1] The lovely d'Albret in two days
  Will tie the nuptial band,
And at Saint-Martin's for the feast
  What gaieties are plann'd!
A charming youth the bridegroom is,
  Form'd on a model rare.
"Pray do you see him?" "No," say you.
  "No more do I, I swear."

tunate war! There is no end to the songs and epigrams of the satirical poets; but I have nothing to do with these: I flatter myself at least that you will receive something by a byway. Once more adieu. This is the second letter I have written to you, since I received yours.

The only son of a great lord,
  A man of consequence;
Three times Ambassador to Rome,
  And Duc and Peer of France.
In Trianon, his blooming bride
  Will make a figure there.
"Pray do you see him?" "No," say you.
  "No more do I, I swear."

The little Comte de Nicei too,
  Of no ignoble race,
And for his age a forward youth,
  The nuptial feast will grace;
Dress'd in a splendid suit, 'tis said,
  And rich beyond compare.
"Pray do you see him?" "No," say you.
  "No more do I, I swear."

'Tis said too, that within a year,
  He may this Duchesse thank
For bringing forth a beauteous babe,
  Worthy his noble rank.
Oh what a charming child 'twill be!
  How sprightly, gay, and fair!
"Pray shall you see him?" "I fear, not."
  "No more shall I, I swear."

How pleas'd the Duc de Chaulnes will be,
  To see his dear son's wife
Enrich his house with such a branch!
  'Twill give him longer life.
But this, alas! is all a song,
  An idle whim, I swear;
For, in good earnest, nought we see,
  And I am in despair.

[Translation.]

*LETTER 1047

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, June 24, 1695.

Madame de Louvois did not wait for the approbation of the world in wishing for Choisy: it is the only house she has ever desired: the King and she have made a very good bargain: they appear also to be highly satisfied; everything has passed on both sides with civilities which we sometimes see take place between private individuals, but which are rarely experienced with a sovereign. The King is at Marly for nine days; the Duchesse du Lude is of the party; and to complete her happiness, she is to take to Pontoise, and bring back from thence, Madame de Maintenon, who is going there to see a nun of St.-Cyr. The King gave an entertainment last Monday, at Trianon, to the King and Queen of England; there was an opera, at which the King was present; Madame de Maintenon did not make her appearance there. The favour which M. de La Rochefoucauld enjoys, is much talked of; it is affirmed that he has gained a complete ascendancy over MONSEIGNEUR's mind, and that he makes all the use of his power which the King could desire. His Majesty, a few days ago, took Madame de Maintenon, followed by her women, to sup at a country-house of this new favourite, which is called *La Selle* (the stool); and I explain it to you thus, that you may not think he took them to *la selle*. He (the King) is going some day to l'Etang, to the house of M. de Barbesieux, that he may appear to divide his favours. Another great article of news is, that the Princesses brought the Comtesse de La Chaise, the Marquises de La Chaise and de La Luzerne, to dine and sup with His Majesty; I suppose this distinction has very much affected them, for till then they had received no other distinction than the salute. M. de Coulanges arrived the day before yesterday from Saint-Martin's: he went immediately to Choisy, the next day to Versailles, and sets out again to-

day for Evreux with M. de Bouillon; I have proposed to him not to lose so much time by the way, and to place himself at once in a swing, which would throw him first to one side and then to the other, without his setting foot to the ground.

I expect the company of a person to-day who would not displease you, my dear: it is M. de Tréville, who is coming to read to two or three persons a work he has composed; it is a summary of the Fathers, which is said to be the finest thing that has ever been written. This work will never see the light, and will only be read to those who will be at my house to-day. I am the only one who is unworthy to hear it; but this is a secret which I confide to you alone.

> . . . . N'abusez pas, Prince, de mon secret:
> Au milieu de ma lettre il m'échappe à regret [1]:

but it has escaped me. M. de Bagnols is gone to join the army; and my sister, I believe, will soon return; she has not, however, spoken to me yet of the day of her departure. Is it very warm at Grignan, my dear? I remember having been there in such weather as this. The affair of Ménil-montant appears quite at an end; I have taken it into my head, however, that it will be brought about at last. My dear friend, adieu.

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*LETTER 1048

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the President* DE MOULCEAU.

Grignan, June 29, 1695.

It is gaining your cause well, Sir, to lose it as you do. In spite of the intention, which I see you have, to break off all intercourse with the world, I cannot help telling you that your style, which we have recognised as possessing its usual charms, has given us a degree of pleasure which we have not experienced since your silence. My daughter and

[1] Do not abuse my confidence, Prince: my secret has escaped me in my letter with regret. [Translation.]

I have read your letter over many times: it is a delightful one; though you, perhaps, did not feel its value. How happy you are, Sir, in preserving this alliance of wit with the seriousness and solidity of devotion! it enables you to make well placed reflections on the two tropics which you have lately seen so near you; and I know not how our friend Corbinelli has been able to withstand your letters. It is pity that a moral intercourse, like that which was established between you, should have been lost: the loss would not have happened with us; and as the appetite increases with eating, we have so great a desire to have once more the honour and pleasure of seeing you here, that my daughter cannot quite understand why, having health, the thought has not occurred to you to come and see us, and why you may not even come this autumn. In vain I represent to her that we shall not be there, and that without me you would fall again into your lethargy; it matters not, she insists on my hazarding the proposal. Indeed if you could judge of the pleasure we should derive from a visit, by the pleasure your letter has given us, I in conscience believe you would not be able to resist us. I am going to speak of you, Sir, to our *friend.* He will reply to me; I shall be obliged to acquaint you with his answer; perhaps he will still find some other opportunity to say a word to you: in short, I will forget no reason nor pretext to make you say a few words more; and to tell you, Sir, that your understanding and your wit have made in no brains such deep impressions as they have done in those of your humble servants.

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*LETTER 1049

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, July 8, 1695.

I can answer for M. de Tréville, that he would have been delighted if you had added to the noble company that heard him; and I am certain, my dear friend, that you

would have been satisfied with your day; but you look down upon us from your Castle at Grignan, and I waste my time in wishing for you, without being able to help it. We are on the alert here, on the great event of the siege of Namur; for it is a very serious, and, apparently, will be a bloody siege: you know that Maréchal de Boufflers has thrown himself into it, with six regiments of foot, dragoons, and the King's regiment of horse: so poor Sanzei is a great man at Namur. Maréchal de Boufflers has the double tertian fever, but he will have other things to do than to attend to it. Maréchal de Lorges is out of danger. Everything here resounds with the praises of Maréchal de Villeroi: it is only a few days ago that the King spoke of him in terms of approbation; and all the warriors that compose his army, write only to sing his praises. I believe, in the end, that the Duc de Chaulnes is going to purchase Puteaux, a house near the bridge of Neuilly, situated on the banks of the river: there is room for wonderful improvements, and he will make them: for he has an extreme desire for a country-house. The King is going to Marly for a fortnight; if the Duchesse du Lude is of the party, it will be for the third time following: these distinctions are very charming when we are in that country; happy is he who can see it all in the point of view in which it should be regarded! I have not seen Father Quesnel's [1] letter; it is said he disowns it, and he cannot do better. You know, my dear, that M. de La Trappe (*the Abbé de Rancé*) has given up his Abbey, with the King's permission, to Don Zozime, the superior of his house; and that he means to become a simple monk: this is worthy of him, and crowns completely a noble life. Father de La Rue's Funeral Oration is now thought no more of than the Queen-Mother's. We have forgotten that a M. de Luxembourg ever existed: foolish is he who calculates on the fame which follows death; this, in truth, ought not to oc-

[1] The celebrated Arnauld died in Flanders, in 1694. He had received the sacraments from the hands of Father Quesnel. The letter in question apparently related to this event.

cupy us in this life; but men will always have their errors, and cherish them.

M. de Coulanges arrived in the evening of the day before yesterday, more delighted with M. de Bouillon, Mademoiselle de Bouillon, and de Navarre, than with all his old friends: he set out yesterday for Choisy, where he will remain till our journey to Saint-Martin's be accomplished: in this sort of parties I only feel myself equal to the strength of the plan; the execution is very much above me. My sister mounts the *hippo-griff* on Sunday, and arrives on Monday at Paris. M. de Bagnols [1] does not lose sight of Maréchal de Villeroi, which makes me tremble for his life. M. de Rheims has purchased Erval's [2] house, at two hundred and twenty-one thousand livres. Adieu, my amiable; forget not to love me, I conjure you, and let me be remembered in the place you inhabit; send me word if the charming Pauline was satisfied with the mysterious portrait you gave her. Madame de Caylus came to see me yesterday, as handsome as an angel; she asked me, as a favour, to come and see the arrangements of her house. I shall suffer more in paying this visit than will appear: what I feel on the subject can only be confided, my dear friend, to you.

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*LETTER 1050

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, July 29, 1695.

Neither M. Arnauld, nor Father Quesnel, my dear friend, is any longer spoken of: every thought is directed towards Namur. Those who have lately fallen, have thrown us into a consternation which leaves us no feeling

[1] Controller of the army of Flanders.

[2] We think it ought to be *Hervart*; he who had been Controller-General under Cardinal Mazarin, and who is called Herval in several memoirs of the times. This house had been the Epernon Mansion.

of joy. Madame de Morstein is inconsolable. The Chancellor's excellent lady[1] bitterly laments her grandson de Vieuxbourg; and Madame de Maulevrier sends from her presence all who would speak comfort to her, even Father Bourdaloue. No tidings are known of Comte d'Albret, except that he has been trepanned; and since then not a word has been heard respecting him. M. and Madame de Chaulnes are extremely uneasy about him. You know that the Prince de Conti has the small-pox: it has come out very heavily, and begins to suppurate without any ill consequences; so that we hope he will do well. Detachments are made on all sides to send to the aid of Namur: Sanzei is on the spot; his mother is the only one who is more to be pitied than he. The Duchesse du Lude, who is returned from Versailles, informs me that she took my grand-niece de La Chaise to dine with the King at Trianon; His Majesty and the Dauphin talked of nothing but the pleasing manners of this little personage, and of the little embarrassment she betrayed: I suppose she confessed[2] the King well. The first President[3] has had a sort of apoplexy; he has been bled four times; his mouth is a little aside; he is to set out immediately for Bourbon. The following is an epigram that has been made on his disorder:

> Ne le saignez pas tant; l'émétique est meilleure;
> Purgez, purgez, purgez, le mal est dans l'*humeur*[4].

I think I should do well to adopt the same plan as this magistrate, for my stomach is still very weak. I have consulted whether I might take coffee two hours after taking germander: I find it may be taken with perfect safety, and that they even agree well together. Adieu, my dear; I shall say no more to you to-day; I only entreat you to make my compliments to *tutti quanti* (all and

[1] Anne-Françoise de Loménie, wife of Louis Boucherat, Chancellor of France.

[2] Allusion to Father de La Chaise, the King's confessor.

[3] Achille de Harlay, first President of the Parliament of France.

[4] Bleed him not so much; an emetic is better; purge him, purge him, purge him, the evil lies in the humour. [Translation.]

every one), and particularly to do yourself the violence to embrace the charming Pauline for me most affectionately. My sister [1] returns you a thousand thanks for the honour of your remembrance, she was highly gratified by it: she is at Versailles for a few days.

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*LETTER 1051

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Monsieur* DE COULANGES.

Grignan, August 6, 1695.

I shall write you only a very short and poor letter, my dear friend, to thank you for yours, which has given us great pleasure. I shall never change my opinion with respect to long and circumstantial details, while I read yours. We are charmed with Navarre [2]; the situation, the building, like that of Marly, which I have never seen, the excellent society—all this convinces me that the house ought to rank with yours: as for Choisy, it is made on purpose for you. Your couplets inform all who pass, of the nobility of its origin and its fate; but you deserve to be exalted to the skies by the couplet, in which you humble yourself to the foot of the mount *with the coachman of Verthamont* [3]; any man who will place himself up to the ears in this mud, and will croak such pretty couplets, deserves the situation M. Tambonneau gives him. The couplet ranks with the best you have ever made; the Comtesse, whose approbation you always ask, entreats you to believe it; it is charming, it surprises: in short, croak on, and communicate your croakings to us.

But, good God, what an effusion of blood at Namur! how many tears! how many widows! and how many afflicted mothers! And they are cruel enough to think this is not sufficient, and they wish that Maréchal de Villeroi had also beaten, killed, and massacred, poor M. de Vau-

[1] Madame de Gué-Bagnols.

[2] A Château near Evreux, which belonged to the Duc de Bouillon.

[3] A famous coachman, who made all the songs of the Pont-Neuf.

demont[1]! what madness! I am uneasy respecting your nephew de Sanzei; I pity his mother; it is said, that she is coming nearer to wait the event of the siege, which appears to us to be worthy of the fury of the Maréchal (*de Boufflers*) who defends it; no opportunity of fighting is lost. Our Germany is very quiet; our principal anxiety is for her[2]. Adieu, my dear cousin; did I not promise you that my letter would be dull? We have sometimes sorrows, and we know why; I speak of them to Madame de Coulanges. My daughter sends you her remembrances; you have highly amused her by your songs and your chat, for your letter is a true conversation. I have scattered your remembrances in every apartment; they have been received, and are returned with zeal. I embrace you, my amiable cousin, and exhort you still to spend your time delightfully in honour of polygamy[3], which, instead of being a hanging-case to you, constitutes all the pleasure and happiness of your life.

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*LETTER 1052

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, August 12, 1695.

The death of M. de Paris[4], my dear, must infallibly have surprised you: never was an event so sudden. Madame de Lesdiguières was present at this spectacle; it is said that her grief is very moderate. The successor is not yet spoken of; but many persons believe that it will be M. de Cambrai (*Fénélon*), and this will certainly be a good choice: others says Cardinal de Janson. We shall know this

[1] M. de Vaudemont made a noble retreat before Maréchal de Villeroi, who had lost time.

[2] On account of the Marquis de Grignan, who was in the army of Germany.

[3] A jest on the subject of M. de Coulanges's *second wife,* Madame de Louvois.

[4] François de Harlay de Champvallon, Archbishop of Paris, died at Conflans, near Paris, August 6, 1695, aged 70.

great point on Monday; the subject is worth thinking of. The question now is, to find a person who will take upon himself the Funeral Oration; it is said that there are two trifling circumstances which render the task difficult—his life, and his death.

You have no doubt received the articles of the capitulation of Namur; you will see that we make war very politely, and kill one another most genteelly. We are now bombarding Brussels [1]; songs, madrigals, and witticisms, are pouring upon Maréchal de Villeroi, who perhaps is not to blame: this is the misfortune of having high positions; happy is he that has none, though few persons consider this to be a blessing. The Comtesse de Gramont has returned; I saw her yesterday, so fatigued by the Bourbon waters, that she confirmed me more than ever in my laziness; she came back in a litter, and says she would much rather have returned on foot. The King goes, on Saturday, to Meudon for two days; the distinctions fall at present upon Meudon, and not upon Marly; everyone has been there this week, even to M. de Buzenval and M. de Saint-Germain. As I feel myself incapable of adopting the resolution of going to Bourbon, I shall try at Paris the waters of Forges; this is called going from hot to cold. Since Madame de Fontevrault [2] has been here, Saint-Joseph's, where she almost constantly is, is the rendezvous of the gay world, but not of gallantry. Adieu, my dear. All M. de Chaulnes's measures are broken up; Madame de Chaulnes comforts herself for everything with Madame de Saint-Germain; she cannot do without her; and this teaches us to do without Madame de Chaulnes.

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[1] Maréchal de Villeroi commanded the army at that period. D'Avrigny says, that two thousand houses were burned in Brussels. The Jesuit, so scrupulous with respect to dates, is not quite so particular with respect to facts. Besides, this bombardment was a retaliation for the assaults made by the enemy against the French maritime towns.

[2] Sister of Madame de Montespan.

*LETTER 1053

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, September 2, 1695.

Alas, my friend! the Archbishop is thought no more of than if he had never been; much ill was said of him after his death: a successor has been named [1]; and since he has been named, both are at rest. The present is a vortex which does not allow for reflections. Everyone was mad yesterday at Paris; nothing was to be seen but women in despair; some running through the streets, others shutting themselves up in churches; nothing was to be heard but "I have no longer a husband!" "I have no longer a son!" Others were silent on their misfortunes, but they did not feel the less [2]. The Comtesse de Fiesque said, that battle was given, and consequently gained: she added, that the Prince of Orange was taken prisoner. I went in the evening to Madame de Kerman's, where I met Madame de Sully, the Duchesse du Lude, Madame de Chaulnes, and a dozen other women, among whom was the Comtesse de Fiesque: when they had talked a long time, I undertook to restore them to reason (a difficult task!) by a little reasoning, which went to prove that no battle had taken place; they all laughed at me; and now that the event justifies my reasoning, they suppose I have the management of the army from this place; nothing is talked of but my penetration, from which I infer that we scarcely ever know why we praise, or why we blame. Yesterday I was a fool, and to-day I am the wisest person in the world; and the truth

[1] Louis-Antoine de Noailles, Bishop of Châlons, afterwards Cardinal.

[2] Namur had just surrendered. This was one of the most successful events, if not one of the most brilliant military achievements, of William III., who was then acknowledged by no other title than that of Prince of Orange. The French lost ten thousand men in this vain defence: it is true that the public were consoled by saying the enemy had lost double the number; but this letter shows that Paris attended but little to this slender consolation.

is, that I am neither the one nor the other; for we learned by a courier who arrived, that it was impossible to give battle without risking the whole army. M. de Conti sent this word to the King, as did the Duc du Maine, and all the chiefs of the army.

M. de Coulanges is still at Navarre; he desires me, in all his letters, to say a thousand things to you for him. The King will set out on the twenty-fourth of this month, for Fontainebleau. M. and Madame de Chaulnes are going immediately to Chaulnes; and it is reported that I am going with them. I am taking the Forges waters, which I find of service to me. I am delighted that Madame de Grignan's health is so good: I congratulate you and her on the circumstance. Do yourself the violence to embrace the charming Pauline for my sake, my dear, I entreat you.

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*LETTER 1054

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, September 9, 1695.

What events, Madame! what talk! what songs! what epigrams! what dignities! Maréchal de Boufflers is created a Duc; but you already know that. The same courier who brought the intelligence of the reduction of Namur, was sent back to inform him, that the King had made him a Duc; and to tell him, at the same time, that he might take the road to Court: and when, from a feeling of gratitude, he found himself impelled to come and return thanks to the King, the Prince of Orange informed him that he was his prisoner. It is supposed that this proceeding was in return for ours at Dixmude [1]: he was disposed, however, to allow him to return upon his parole; but the Maréchal

[1] It appears that Louvois, contrary to the capitulations, had kept the garrisons of Dixmude and Deynse. The Prince of Orange retaliated, by making them be given up in exchange for Maréchal de Boufflers. Whatever affectation Louis XIV. may have adopted in rewarding this General, his defence of Namur has been very much criticised by Feuquières, and perhaps justly.

believed he ought to wait for the King's orders. The Maréchal is in raptures at his new title, and does not yet know the evils it may bring, which, according to appearances, are not far off. Let us return to the epigrams: Maréchal de Villeroi is bespattered with them; he has however the consolation of knowing that the King is convinced he is not to blame: but I know well what I am saying; the world will judge of what it does not understand; and as we are guided by the opinion of others, we are foolish enough to think ourselves unfortunate in spite of our good conduct. The King is going to-day to Marly for ten days.

M. and Madame de Chaulnes will set out in a few days for Chaulnes, and I with them: what say you to this courage? Do you not think me really a great woman? M. de Coulanges is still at Evreux; Madame de Louvois pouts at him; Mademoiselle de Bouillon passionately loves him, and detains him in spite of himself. I write to him regularly, and send him all the news; to whom do you give the preference? The passions are horrible; I have never hated them so much as since they are no longer in my way; this is fortunate. Our dragoon [1] has come off with honour, and quite lives on horseback; he has written a very entertaining letter to his sister; he has been mentioned particularly to the King, in every account that has been sent; and what is more, Madame de Montchevreuil herself told me so. You may easily guess, my dear, the delight of Madame de Sanzei, who now knows that her son is well: think, that out of twelve thousand men that were at Namur, only three thousand three hundred remain. I forgot to tell you, that it was M. de Guiscard who came to Court with the information that Maréchal de Boufflers is a prisoner. Madame de Sully has the same complaint as Madame de Grignan; she is taking the waters of Forges, which are of infinite service to her: but Forges is rather too far from Grignan; she should come nearer, my friend. I forgive Madame de Sully for this disorder; but Madame

[1] M. de Sanzei, M. de Coulanges's nephew.

de Grignan is a little too forward for her age. It is said that of all illnesses this is the least troublesome. I request you to inform me constantly of the state of Madame de Grignan's health, about whom I am very uneasy. Let me not be forgotten where you are, and kiss the charming Pauline for my sake; you will acknowledge that I exact very difficult things from your friendship.

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*LETTER 1055

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, September 15, 1695.

It is only to mark the cadence that I write to you, Madame, to-day; for I have received no letter from you this week, and I am ashamed of having no great events to inform you of, which for some time have not failed us. To tell you that the King has been at Marly for a week, is rare news to be sure; the Duchesse du Lude is there; the King returns to-morrow, and is to set out on the twenty-second of this month for Fontainebleau. The most extraordinary piece of intelligence however is, that I believe I shall go on Sunday to Versailles for two or three days. The journey to Chaulnes will be immediately in agitation: I hope also that I shall be of that party; but my health is so easily impaired, that I dare not now form any plans. M. de Coulanges is to return to-day from Evreux, to break with Madame de Louvois, and go to Chaulnes. I must also inform you, my friend, that it is Father Gaillard who is *not* to make the Funeral Oration of the late Archbishop (*of Paris*). What I mean is this: the first President and Father de La Chaise applied to Father Gaillard on this great business; Father Gaillard replied, that he perceived many difficulties in the undertaking [1]. These, however, are obviated thus: he is to deliver a sermon on the deceased,

[1] Mascaron had refused to compose the Funeral Oration of the Archbishop of Paris, alleging that he was *incommodé* (indisposed). The opportunity was not lost of replying: "Say also that the subject is *incommode* (troublesome)."

in the midst of the ceremony; to turn everything into morality; to avoid praise and censure, which are two very dangerous rocks; the prelude to Funeral Orations will be omitted; he will throw himself at once upon the audience by exhortation; he will speak of the surprise of death, will say little of the deceased, and then, God lead you to eternal life. Adieu, my lovely friend; let my remembrance be preserved at Grignan, and especially by the charming Pauline. I believe M. de Chaulnes intends to purchase Villeffit of M. de Fieubet, at which Madame de Chaulnes appears very dissatisfied. Madame de Grignan's confessor-extraordinary[1] is to read to me, to-morrow, the Funeral Oration he has made upon this pious man.

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*LETTER 1056

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Monsieur* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Grignan, Tuesday, September 20, 1695.

And so you are at our poor *Rocks,* my dear children, experiencing there the sweets of tranquillity, exempt from all duties and fatigues, and our dear little Marquise can breathe again! Good heavens! how well you describe to me her situation, and her extreme delicacy! I am so affected at it, and I enter so affectionately into your ideas, that my heart is oppressed, and tears rush into my eyes. It is to be hoped that you will only have the merit of bearing your sorrows with resignation and submission; but if God should appoint otherwise, like all unforeseen events, it would turn out differently from your expectations: I will believe, however, that this dear being will last, with care, as long as anyone; we have a thousand examples of recovery. Has not Mademoiselle de La Trousse (*Mademoiselle de Méri*) suffered from almost every kind of disorder? In the meantime, my dear child, I enter into your feelings with infinite affection, and from the bottom of

[1] This seems to allude to some jest of M. de Coulanges.

my heart. You do me justice when you say you are afraid of affecting me too much by relating to me the state of your mind: it does indeed affect me, be assured I feel for you keenly. I hope this letter will find you calmer and happier. Paris seems to be quite out of your thoughts, on account of our Marquise. You are thinking only of Bourbon and the spring. Continue to inform me of your plans, and do not leave me in ignorance of any thing that concerns you.

Give me some account of the letters of the twenty-third and thirtieth of August. There was also a note for Galois, which I desired M. Branjon to pay. Give me an answer upon this subject. The good Branjon is married; he has written me a very charming letter upon the occasion. Let me know whether the match is as good as he represents it to be. The lady is related to all the Parliament, and to M. d'Harouïs. Explain this to me, my child. I also addressed a letter to you for our Abbé Charrier. He will be sorry not to see you again; and M. de Toulon! you express yourself well respecting this ox: it is for him to tame him, and for you to stand firm where you are. Return the Abbé's letter to Quimperlé.

With regard to your poor sister's health, it is not at all good. It is no longer her loss of blood that alarms us, for that is over; but she does not recover her strength; she is still so much altered that you would scarcely know her, because her stomach does not regain its tone, and no food seems to nourish her: this arises from the bad state of her liver, of which you know she has long complained. It is so serious an evil, that I am really alarmed at it. Remedies might be used for her liver, but they are unfavourable to the loss of blood, which we are in continual apprehension may return, and which has produced a bad effect upon the afflicted part. These two maladies, which require opposite medicines, reduce her to a truly pitiable situation. Time, we hope, will repair this devastation: I sincerely wish it; and if we enjoy this blessing, we shall go to Paris with all expedition. This is the point to which we are arrived, and

which must be cleared up; I will be very faithful in my communications.

This languor makes us say little yet of the return of the warriors. I do not doubt, however, that the business will be concluded, it is too far advanced; but it will be without any great joy; and even if we go to Paris, they would set out two days after, to avoid the air of a wedding, and visits, which they wish not to receive; *a burnt child, etc.*

As to M. de St.-Amand's grief, of which such a parade has been made at Paris, it was founded upon my daughter's having really proved by memorandums, which she has showed to us all, that she had paid her son nine thousand francs out of ten she had promised him; and having in consequence sent him only a thousand, M. de St.-Amand said he was cheated, that they wanted to take advantage of him, and that he would give no more, having already given the fifteen thousand francs of his daughter's portion (which he laid out at Paris in stock, and for which he has the estates that were given up to him here), and that the Marquis must seek for assistance in that quarter. You may suppose that when *that quarter* has paid, it may occasion some little chagrin; but it is at an end. M. de St.-Amand thought in himself that it would not be advisable to quarrel with my daughter: so he came here as gentle as a lamb, wishing for nothing but to please and to take his daughter back with him to Paris; which he has done, though, in good truth, she ought to have waited for us: but the advantage of being in the same house with her husband, in that beautiful mansion of M. de St.-Amand; of being handsomely lodged, and living sumptuously at no expense; made my daughter consent without hesitation to accept all these comforts. But we did not see her depart without tears, for she is very amiable; and was so much affected at bidding us adieu, that it could scarcely have been supposed she was going to lead a life of pleasure in the midst of plenty. She had become very fond of our society. She set out with her father on the first of this month.

Be assured, my son, that no Grignan intends you harm; that you are beloved by all; and that if this trifle had been a serious thing, they would have felt that you would have taken as much interest in it as you have done.

M. de Grignan is still at Versailles; we expect him shortly, for the sea is clear; and Admiral Russel, who is no longer to be seen, will give him leave to come here.

I shall seek for the two little writings you mention. I rely much upon your taste. The letters to M. de La Trappe, are books we cannot send, though in manuscript. You shall read them at Paris, where I still hope to see you; for I love you in a much greater degree than you can love me. It is the order of nature, and I do not complain.

I enclose you a letter from Madame de Chaulnes, which I send to you entire, from confidence in your prudence. You will justify yourself in things to which you well know what answer to make, and will pay no attention to those that may offend you. I have said for myself all I had to say, waiting for your answer respecting what I did not know; and I added, that I would inform you of what the Duchesse told me. Write to her therefore candidly, as having learned from me what she writes respecting you. After all, you should preserve this connection; they love you, and have rendered you service; you must not wound gratitude. I have said, that you owed obligations to the Controller. But to you, my child, I say, is this friendship incompatible with your ancient leagues with the first President and the Attorney-General? Is it necessary that you should break with your old friends, for the sake of securing a Controller. M. de Pommereuil did not exact such conduct. I have also said, that you ought to be heard; and that it was impossible you should have neglected to congratulate the Attorney-General upon the marriage of his daughter. In short, my child, defend yourself; and tell me what you say, that I may second you.

What follows is for my good President.

I have received your last letter, my dear President; it is pleasing, like everything you write. I am astonished

that you have received no answer from *Dupuis,* I fear he is ill.

You are fortunate in having my son and our Marquise with you. Take care of her; divert her; amuse her; in short, put her in cotton, and preserve to us this dear and precious personage. Do not fail to let me hear of her health; I take real interest in it.

My son sends me the congratulations of *Pilois*[1] and the workmen, who have finished the labyrinth. I accept their kindness, and I love and thank them. I would give them something to drink, if I were there.

My daughter and your idol love you dearly; but I more than all. Adieu, my good President; my son will show you this letter. I embrace your dove.

[*N. B. On the back of the foregoing letter of eleven pages, the following words are written in the handwriting of the Marquis de Sévigné*: "*From my mother, the* 20 *September,* 1695.]

*LETTER 1057

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, September 30, 1695.

I am going to talk to you very learnedly respecting Madame de Grignan's disorder; that is, of the pain in her stomach, which is exactly the same as mine; my impatience has led me to try all sorts of medicines, and I shall be happy if my experience can be of use to her. Carette gave me his drops for nine months; they occasioned me no real pain, but they shrivelled me up to such a degree, without strengthening my stomach, that I will own to you, in confidence, that they made me ill a second time. Now for Helvetius; he has given me a preparation of wormwood, which has completely restored my stomach; as it leaves some degree of heat, but slight however, he has made me

[1] The gardener at *The Rocks.*

take the Forges waters, which have agreed with me admirably. I begin to grow fat, I eat fruit, I eat dinner and supper; in short, my friend, I am no longer the same being that I was two months ago. You know why I relate all these particulars to you: bring Madame de Grignan, then, to Paris; I promise you that in three weeks Helvetius and I will restore her stomach, which is the seat of almost every disease. I am even reconciled to coffee, and as I know not how to use a thing without abusing it, I drink it to excess; my darling wormwood is a remedy for all disorders.

You will ask me, my friend, why, being so well as I tell you, I am not at Chaulnes? and my answer will be, that I am like those who become avaricious from being rich; since I have had something like health, I am become very careful of it. The bad weather alarmed me; if I could have foreseen, that it would be as fine as it is at present, I believe I should have undertaken this long journey; but I reserve myself for Dampierre, and I convert my house very easily into a country-house: I walk every morning upon the ramparts, and I spend the afternoons in solitude. The English Court is at Fontainebleau; they have plays, and entertainments, and still they say they are dull; so much the worse for them. The Marquise de Grignan will see no one, which has prevented me from presenting myself at her door as often as I should have done. M. de Chaulnes, who has the knack of forcing open doors, says she is very amiable. M. de Coulanges is gone to Chaulnes; they will all return in a month, which is a very short time. The Abbé and I do not leave Madame de Sanzei ignorant of what you say of her. I beg you, my dear, to give a thousand compliments for me to Madame de Grignan: I beg you also to embrace the lovely Pauline for my sake, as if you had no reason to complain of her.

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*LETTER 1058

From Monsieur DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Chaulnes, October 10, 1695.

I am now absolutely in the service of the Duchesse de Chaulnes; she is my good mistress, though M. de Chaulnes assures me that I have taken a strange place, and that I serve a strange mistress. She is going to speak, listen to her attentively.

Madame DE CHAULNES *writes to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.
(*Enclosed in Monsieur* DE COULANGES' *letter.*)

Here we are, my dear gouvernante, in a house which is not very ugly, and which my secretary (M. de Coulanges) thinks tolerably well furnished; but we often experience very bad weather, which is a sad thing in the country. Let us talk, my dear gouvernante, of the beautiful Comtesse, about whom we should be very uneasy, if we did not hope that her health henceforth will be improved: but I advise you not to let her take M. Alliot's medicines, for the late Madame Colbert found herself much worse for them. You must think of nothing but of nursing her well; and for gently restoring her stomach, you have only to take her into a milder air than Grignan, as soon as possible. I am impatient for the campaign to be over, that you may send me word Mademoiselle de Grignan has changed her name: no one wishes more sincerely than I do to see her well established. I am delighted, my dear gouvernante, that you disapprove the purchase of all the vile houses near Paris, and like the acquisition we have made of Dampierre; I believe I informed you that we did not give a silver penny in exchange. We have Dampierre, with five thousand livres a year, which are attached to it, to keep it in good repair; and, during the life of M. de Chaulnes, M. de Chevreuse will take from our income five thousand livres a year more. We shall accommodate each other with respect to furniture, that we may have no con-

fusion. I hope, my dear gouvernante, you will often come and spend some little time with me there, and that you will not be sorry to be sometimes in the neighbourhood of Port-Royal-des-Champs. My secretary has read your letter to M. de Chaulnes with all due emphasis, and we have pitied the beautiful Comtesse; but I leave M. de Chaulnes to inform you of his eagerness to see the Marquise de Grignan: he has received all your son's letters, and he is highly pleased with them. We must not enter into country cabals, till we are all together at Paris; you will conclude that I am still disposed to bring an action against them, no one being better acquainted with the gossipings of Rennes; and the secretary knows too well what a risk Beaucé formerly ran, at the Meneuf Mansion, on account of his vile tongue. We must wait till the winter, then, for every sort of explanation, with the good intention to restore peace. Madame de La Châtre is brought to bed of a fine boy; M. de Lavardin, his grandfather, and Madame de La Châtre, his grandmother, are already appointed his sponsors. Fontainebleau says not a word, and Flanders still less; all the armies disperse on the twenty-fifth of this month; and the King and Queen of England are already returned from Fontainebleau to Saint-Germain. My dear gouvernante, I am yours, and the beautiful Comtesse's. A thousand compliments to all at Grignan.

Monsieur DE COULANGES *continues and concludes his letter.*

I must tell you for myself, that I have been very much alarmed at the situation in which you described Madame de Grignan; I did not know she was ill; you cannot doubt that I pray for her better health, for more reasons than one; for, vagabond as I am, I am very impatient to meet you sometimes in my way. A thousand caresses, a thousand affectionate remembrances, a thousand respects, a thousand compliments for you, my dearest gouvernante, and for all that surround you. As soon as the weather is fine, I should wish Madame de Coulanges to come here; but, indeed, we came too late for health so shattered as

hers; for my own part, I am become a giddy-headed fellow, which nothing injures, and who is always upon his legs, as if it had never had the gout.

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*LETTER 1059

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Monsieur* DE COULANGES.

Grignan, October 15, 1695.

I have just been writing to our Duc and Duchesse de Chaulnes; but I excuse you from reading my letters; they are not worth reading. I defy all your emphasis, all your points and commas, to produce any good effect, therefore leave them as they are; besides, I have spoken of several little things to our Duchesse, which are not very entertaining. The best thing you could do for me, my good cousin, would be to send us, by some subtle magic, all the blood, all the vigour, all the health, and all the mirth, which you have to spare, to transfuse it into my child's frame. For these three months she has been afflicted with a species of disorder which is said to be not dangerous, and which I think the most distressing, and the most alarming, of any. I own to you, my dear cousin, that it destroys me, and that I have not fortitude enough to endure all the bad nights she makes me pass; in short, her last state has been so violent, that it was necessary to have recourse to bleeding in the arm: strange remedy, which makes blood to be shed when too much has been shed already; it is burning the taper at both ends; she has told us so, for, in the midst of her weakness and change, nothing can exceed her courage and patience. If we could regain strength, we would soon take the road to Paris; it is what we wish, and then we would present the Marquise de Grignan to you, with whom you must already begin to be acquainted on the word of the Duc de Chaulnes, who has very gallantly forced open her door, and has drawn a very pleasing likeness of her. Preserve your friendship for us, my dear cousin, however unworthy of it our sorrow may make us; we must love our

friends with all their faults; it is a great one to be ill: God grant, my dear friend, that you may escape it. I write to Madame de Coulanges in the same plaintive tone, which will not quit me; for how is it possible not to be as ill in mind, as this Comtesse, whom I see daily before my eyes, is in body? Madame de Coulanges is very fortunate in being out of the scrape; it seems to me as if mothers ought not to live long enough to see their daughters in such situations: I respectfully complain of it to Providence.

We have just been reading a discourse that has charmed us all, and even the Archbishop of Arles, who is one of the trade; it is the Funeral Oration of M. de Fieubet by the Abbé Anselme; it is the most correct, the wisest, the most suitable, and the most Christian performance, that it was possible to make on such a subject: it is full of quotations from the Holy Scriptures, of excellent applications, of devotion, of piety, of dignity, and of a noble flowing style. Read it: if you are of our opinion, so much the better for you; and if you are not, so much the better for you still, in one sense, as it is a sign that your happiness, your health, and your vivacity, render you deaf to this language. But be this as it may, such is the advice I give you; for it is certain that we cannot laugh always; a song tells us this truth.

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*LETTER 1060

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, October 28, 1695.

You have had the colic, my dear friend; and though I know that you are now well, I cannot be satisfied till I hear it from yourself. I ask you also for information respecting Madame de Grignan; if you knew how much a keen air is against her complaint, you would oblige her to place herself in a comfortable and commodious litter, and come to Paris: the air of Lyons would teach her, that there is no better remedy for her than change of climate; this is the advice of my oracle (Helvetius). Madame (la Maré

chale) de Boufflers has been very ill of a similar disorder; she is now recovered. The King is returned in perfect health. I saw the Duchesse du Lude yesterday, who is come to Paris to take medicine and to be bled, for no other reason, I think, than being in too good a state of health. Great changes have taken place at Chaulnes; M. de Chaulnes loves his Château as he loves his life, and cannot leave it. Madame de Chaulnes spends her days, and perhaps a great part of her nights, in gaming. M. de Coulanges is become delicate and formal; country visits annoy him. I often see our little woman in the straw (the Duchesse de Villeroi [1]); she has a son a little bigger than his father, and a little less than the Maréchal (de Villeroi). Not a day passes in which she does not inquire after Mademoiselle de Grignan, and wish her all the happiness and all the pain she herself feels. It is said, that Maréchal de Lorges is better, and that his disorder is no longer considered as apoplexy: his lady, who is gone to meet him, will accompany him to the waters of Plombières. Everyone believes the marriage of M. de Lesdiguières with Mademoiselle de Clérembault [2] concluded: the charm Madame de Lesdiguières finds in this marriage is, that she will not have her son with her. The world also speaks of the marriage of Mademoiselle d'Aubigné with the son [3] of M. de Noailles, and I believe that, in this instance, the world says true. I have also to inform you, that the Abbé Têtu is delighted with Madame de Kerman; and that he complains loudly of his friends, for not having introduced him sooner to this meritorious lady. The solitude of the Marquise de Grignan is very much talked of here; her life is said to be insupportable, because she must see no one, or the best company: you perceive how necessary it is for you and her mother-in-law [4] to return; my advice upon this subject would appear in-

[1] Marguerite Le Tellier, daughter of the Marquis de Louvois, Minister of War.

[2] This marriage with Mademoiselle de Clérembault did not take place; he married Mademoiselle de Duras, the daughter of Maréchal de Duras, in 1696.

[3] This marriage did not take place till the first of April, 1698.

[4] The Comtesse de Grignan.

terested to you; but I hope this reason will not prevent you from following it, and that you will believe me as affectionately yours as I am in reality. I beg the favour of you to say a thousand things from me to Madame de Grignan, and not to forget the beautiful and charming Pauline.

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*LETTER 1061

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, November 7, 1695.

Helvetius, after having reflected with all possible attention upon what you told me, my dear friend, wished to take away your letter, to consider it at leisure; he only told me yesterday what I am now going to relate to you. He is convinced that a keen air is very injurious to Madame de Grignan, and that if it were possible for her to place herself in a commodious litter, and take short journeys, she would find herself relieved the moment she got to Lyons; this is a remedy which we highly approve here. Our oracle, this Helvetius, has saved the life of the poor *Tourte*; he has a certain remedy to stop the blood, come from whatever quarter it may [1]; he is a very charming and a very learned man; his countenance does not indicate so much wisdom, for he is as much like Dupré as two drops of water are like each other. I beg you to inform me how Madame de Grignan is, as a reward for my consultations. The Marquis de Grignan has been to see me; he is certainly not so fat as he was; I congratulated him upon it very sincerely. His lady did me the honour to come here yesterday: I thought her so much improved, that she appeared to me quite a different being from what I had formerly seen her; it is because she is grown fatter, and has a much better countenance; her eyes were so brilliant, that they dazzled me. She came at two, with her mother and sister; unfortunately for me, Madame de Nevers rose as

[1] It has been seen elsewhere that this remedy was the root ipecacuanha.

early in the morning as they did; she arrived a few moments after these ladies, who went away on her entrance. She said to me, with much apparent sincerity, that she thought the Marquise very handsome. M. and Madame de Chaulnes, and M. de Coulanges, arrive at Paris on Wednesday to dinner: I am to be at the Chaulnes' Mansion to receive them. The King is at Marly till Monday; the Comtesse de Gramont is also there; but though she has caught the graces of novelty at Court, she is not, poor woman, at all the better for it; all her pains are returned; she bears them with a courage and cheerfulness that astonish me, having lost, I believe, even the hope of a cure. The Duchesse de Villeroi receives her visits in bed, as pretty as it is possible to be: I did the honours of her chamber two days ago with the Maréchal's lady (de Villeroi). I have discovered in this little Duchesse a merit which raises her greatly in my estimation: she has so strong an attachment for Mademoiselle de Grignan, that she is extremely interested in her welfare: she is continually asking me about her; she wishes her all the happiness she deserves, but she will not consent to her marriage with anyone, unless she is sure to see her here; in short, she feels and thinks: this is one of the miracles Pauline has wrought. I have heard news of her; it is said, that you are going to have another wedding [1]; I am delighted at it, my friend; return then all together, life is too short for such long absence; the longest life seems only to be a few hours. I send you a letter from M. de Vannes, which has actually been three months in my writing-desk; I ask his pardon; but I am certain, that you will be as much pleased with it now, as at the time it was written. Adieu, my dearest; send me word quickly that you are coming back, and that you can no longer endure that the young Marquise de Grignan should live in such retirement; like me, she sighs for your return.

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[1] The marriage of Mademoiselle de Grignan, who was to espouse the Marquis de Simiane.

*LETTER 1062

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, November 18, 1695.

M. de Lamoignon showed me a letter yesterday from the Chevalier de Grignan, which informed me that your daughter is much better; I am delighted at it, and I wish with all my heart to hear of the continuance of this convalescence: I have the confidence to believe you will let me know it. This gives me the hope that we shall soon see you; indeed, there is nothing I so ardently desire: your return is necessary on many accounts; one of the principal is Madame de Grignan; another, that her daughter-in-law is too much neglected here; a third, the return of M. de Sévigné, which draws near; these are weighty reasons, my dear, why you should come and see us! Paris is at present very full, but it will not be so, in my opinion, till you are among us. I long to hear whether Madame de Grignan has made use of crab-broth, and whether it has been of service to her. There are excellent dinners and delightful parties every day at the Chaulnes' Mansion, where your company is constantly desired. The Marquis de Grignan did me the honour to call upon me two days ago; I thanked him for not being grown fat; he appears to me highly pleased with the palace he inhabits. I hear from Lyons, that the charming Pauline is about to change her name; shall you not bring her with you? I can never love anyone, but Madame de Simiane, so much as I love Mademoiselle de Grignan. Alas! talking of Simiane, poor M. de Langres [1] is at the point of death; I am quite uneasy about him. I believe M. Nicole is dead; he was seized with an apoplexy two days ago: Racine came with all speed, to give him some English drops, which recovered him; but I have just heard that he is relapsed; it will be a great loss. He has exhausted himself by writing; it is said, that he in-

[1] Louis-Marie-Armand de Simiane de Gordes, Bishop of Langres, died on the 21st of November, 1695.

jured his head by his last book against the *Quietists* [1]; indeed they were not worth the pains. Adieu, my amiable; I am always impatient to hear from you, but still more so at present, on account of the state of Madame de Grignan.

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*LETTER 1063

From Monsieur DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SIMIANE.

The neighbourhood of Richelieu [2], January 6, 1696.

I am certainly very much gratified, Madame, by the honour of your remembrance; but it seems to me, that you might have written to me in a less serious tone than you have done; I am consoled, however, because you date your letter from Vauréas [3], and you must know, I think, how much curiosity I have all my life had to see this beautiful town, without being able to satisfy it. And are you really, Madame, residing at Vauréas? How happy you must be! And shall a man who has sojourned so long at Rome, be deprived of the pleasure of seeing it even for a quarter of an hour? but I will not despair of seeing it some day, since I hear that you have a Palace there, very handsomely furnished. Do you not remember my attachment to one of Madame de Grignan's servants, merely because he came from Vauréas; and how, in return, he considered it as a sacred duty to come and see me at Paris, where I had not the advantage of keeping him long, because Paris had no charms for him? Do you not also remember, when I was at Grignan, how happy I used to think those whom I saw going to, or returning from, that town? You will, therefore, suppose that when you are there, I shall not pity you. But enough of Vauréas. I must now tell you that I am very impatient to see you here, and become acquainted

[1] Nicole wrote on the quarrel between Bossuet and Fénélon; but opposed the latter with mildness and respect.

[2] At Madame de Louvois's.

[3] A little town of the Venetian county, where Madame de Simiane sometimes resided after her marriage.

with the young handsome Lord, whom you mention to me; but I am a little afraid he will be shocked at first at my old age, and my figure: I can assure you however, Madame, that my presence is not yet prohibited at several good houses; I write this at the house of my *second wife*: she found me with so bad a cold, on my return from Versailles, where I have been spending a fortnight, that she will not trust to Madame de Coulanges to cure it: for the last two nights, therefore, I have slept at her house; and, to all appearance, I shall sleep there several more, to be at the wedding of M. de Barbesieux, which will take place on Tuesday. I see nothing around me but jewels, magnificent dresses, linen incredibly fine, and a single set of ornaments for the head, worth five hundred crowns. I see nothing but sumptuous repasts; I hear nothing but exquisite music; in short, I am in an excellent house, where I always receive great honours and distinctions, and where I often hear myself called by the tender appellations of husband and father-in-law. I have an excellent apartment, comfortably warm, and very near the Duchesse de Villeroi's, where I take my *eau sucrée* before I go to bed. It is a long time since I wrote to Madame de Sévigné, as well as to your mother; but I hope they will hear of me through you. While I am here, engaged in the wedding of *my son* de Barbesieux, Madame de Coulanges is wasting her poor life in endeavouring to bring about the marriage of M. de Mornai and Mademoiselle du Gué. I never saw a child so difficult to baptize; but it will be done some time or other, though I know not the day, nor the place where the nuptials will be solemnized; nothing is more whimsical than what passes between the blind man and his wife, who can never be of the same opinion; and Madame de Coulanges and Madame de Bagnols are also very different sisters. I know not whether I shall show my nose at this wedding: Madame de Monchevreuil has told me, however, that it is necessary I should be at the entertainments that will be given at Versailles. But do you think my son's wedding my only engagement? Let me tell you,

I have been at a gay dinner, at Cardinal de Bouillon's, where I was formally invited, and treated with a distinction that was very flattering to my vanity. There were present all who bear the name of Bouillon, La Trémouille, and Créqui, and I was presented to Mademoiselle de La Trémouille so particularly, that from her civilities and kindness I thought her the most lovely woman in the world. This is the effect of courtesy, joined to the best figure I ever beheld, and to high birth, which is sure to charm me; for you know I always had a taste for great fish. The wedding-day is not yet fixed; it depends on the return of a courier, who is gone to Rome for a dispensation. When the marriage of Madame de Seignelai and M. de Luxembourg will take place, is not yet known; everything, however, is agreed upon, and nothing wanting but the consent of Madame de Luxembourg. The marriage of Mademoiselle de Monaco with the Duc d' Usèz, and that of the Marquis de Janson with Mademoiselle de Virieu, are thought to be in good train. With respect to Mademoiselle de Duras and M. de Lesdiguières, some bet that the match will take place, and others that it will not; but Madame de Lesdiguières denies it so strongly, that she begins to be considered as the intended of M. de Mazarin: it will be curious if Madame de Duras, by her good sense, should have profited cheaply by the extravagance of both, to establish her daughters so well. Maréchal de Lorges has retired from the service, some say voluntarily, others not. The King has just made a thousand officers Generals; I have the list of them before my eyes; I do not send it you, because your brother will probably not fail to do so: I was sorry not to see his name in it. I have seen your sister-in-law only once; unless you are all here, I do not consider that you will be much acquainted: but when shall you be here, ladies? Is your mother's health sufficiently established for us to believe what she says respecting the first of March? I was delighted to hear that Madame de Sévigné has been running about the country; I like her star to agree with mine, which may well be

called *wandering*. It would be difficult to employ better the second crop of youth, of which I am possessed: God grant that it may last a few years longer; but it is wonderful that I should not know what has become of the gout, which afflicted me so much two years ago; and for which you consoled me by offering me your arm, that I might take some sort of exercise in my apartment. This letter carries me to a great length, as you see; but what can I do better than chat with you, my adorable Pauline, since I have leisure for it? Madame de Louvois is gone into the town; and, as the master of the house, I have stayed within, by a very good fire, with all the implements before me necessary to write to you: she has also very opportunely left the Duchesse de Villeroi with me, that she may acquit herself of a compliment she has long wished to pay you. Cardinal de Bouillon likewise wished to congratulate you; and it is my fault that I have not kept him to it. The Duchesse de Villeroi too has often desired me to say a thousand things to you, and to your two mothers; and Madame de Louvois the same. In short, ladies, not one of you is forgotten in this country; but it is time to conclude, and to assure you, Madame, that this year differs from no preceding year in the respect and sincere friendship with which I am a thousand times more devoted to you than to any one in the world. The Duchesse de Villeroi will write to you, she says, with her fair hand.

The Duchesse DE VILLEROI *also writes to Madame* DE SIMIANE.

(*Enclosed in Monsieur* DE COULANGES' *letter.*)

I have long intended, Madame, to congratulate you on your marriage, without having done so, which is owing to Coulanges, who always told me that we should write to you together; at length the happy moment is arrived, and I employ it, Madame, in assuring you that I still preserve for you all the esteem and friendship which your high merits deserve.

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*LETTER 1064

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the President* DE MOULCEAU.

Grignan, Wednesday, January 25, 1696.

I answered your last letter, Sir, at the beginning of the year: this note, then, is only to request you to let M. de Barbeyrac read the accompanying consultations on the state of my daughter's health; and to beg him to increase, if it be possible, his usual attention in giving us his opinion, which we highly value, and to send it us as soon as he possibly can. This, Sir, is the request I have to make to your heart, which, I am sure, has not forgotten how much mine is alive to everything that concerns my daughter: and, on so important an occasion, I believe I should offend you if I offered the least apology, or paid you the least compliment.

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*LETTER 1065

From Monsieur DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, January 27, 1696.

I hope the letter I wrote to you this day week, was not ill received. I had a delightful little letter the next day, which gave me the more pleasure because, by telling me you should only write me one word for a thousand which I was to write to you in return, I found, that of my own good and free will, I had obliged you beforehand, and satisfied, it seems to me, every question you could ask me. To-day, my dear gouvernante, my letter will not be so long, for it is not always holiday. The new Duchesses d'Usèz and Lesdiguières have been presented to the King. The Dowager Duchesse de Lesdiguières went to Versailles with all the Durases, and even slept there; and it is reported that His Majesty treated them a little seriously,

and that all he said was, that he wished the young Duchesse might be happy.

Madame DE COULANGES *also writes at the same time to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

(*Enclosed in Monsieur* DE COULANGES' *letter.*)

I shall not write to you to-day, my dear; M. de Coulanges is much more deserving of this pleasure than I am; his youth allows him an intercourse with the world, which is a great ornament to his mind. He will give you an account of the ball at the Palace Royal, and of the finery of the beauties which composed this noble assembly. I saw Madame de Barbesieux and the Duchesse de Villeroi, who appeared to me resplendent; diamonds, and the magnificence and brilliancy of gold and silver, deceive me, and prevent me from distinguishing beauty so well as when it is less loaded with ornaments. Madame de Mornai receives all the distinctions that follow favour, without appearing to be much alive to them; she will become more so, I hope, that she may at least find pleasure in what charms every other person. I saw M. de Pomponne the day before yesterday; we again talked of you, my dear friend, and of all that bears the name of Grignan; we complained affectionately of yours and Madame de Grignan's long absence. I went afterwards to Madame de Vins; I changed company without changing conversation; we concluded that Madame de Grignan would only recover her health by coming to breathe the air of this country. Be assured, my dear Madame, of this truth; think also sometimes how much the Marquise de Grignan must be in want of her mother-in-law: if these reflections should oblige you to take the road to Paris, no one will profit by it so joyfully as I shall do. I ask the favour of you to say a thousand things for me to your daughter. Is it true, that Madame de Simiane is with child? Nothing that concerns her is indifferent to me; I have never seen anyone who is so often thought of, or so sincerely praised; but I always say, "Remembering her is not seeing her."

Monsieur DE COULANGES *continues and concludes his letter to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Your friend has taken the place of Aurora to-day; I never saw her looking handsomer, nor with a complexion more indicative of health. This too is after experiments made the day before yesterday, of dining at the Chaulnes' Mansion, and yesterday evening of supping at M. de Lamoignon's; in short, which is saying everything, she ventured upon a slice, a small one indeed, of Amiens duck, and a drop of St.-Laurent wine: is she not making great progress? But let us return to our folds: there was a grand ball on Friday at the Palace Royal, to which all the *masques* were admitted, and they introduced the usual confusion. I assisted Madame de Coulanges in dressing Mesdames de Villeroi and de Barbesieux, who completely dazzled me; I also saw, what Madame de Coulanges did not see, Mademoiselle de Tourpes with a velvet dress of flame colour, so magnificent that it defies all description. When the ladies (les Maréchales) de Villeroi and d'Estrées, followed by these three infantas, had set out for Madame de Louvois's, at eleven o'clock at night, to repair to the Palace Royal, I stayed an hour and a half longer at *lansquenet*; and was then set down at my door by Madame de Varengeville, and have not been out since. I know, therefore, no more of the ball than Madame de Coulanges. I dined with her, the day before yesterday, at the Chaulnes' Mansion; and supped with her, last evening, at M. de Lamoignon's, where we met the beautiful Duchesse du Lude, the Lady President Le Coigneux baked in an oven, the good Duc de Chaulnes, and the excellent Advocate-General d'Aguesseau [1], who knows all my songs, and gets them by heart as if he had nothing else to do. I shall not return so soon to sleep with my *second wife,* because tomorrow I am to dine at the Duchesse du Lude's with Cardinal de Bouillon; where I shall not fail to give all the compliments you charge me with. The marriage of the

[1] Afterwards Chancellor of France.

Duc d'Albret and Mademoiselle de La Trémouille, only depends now on a fever, which has attacked the Duchesse de Créqui; for the dispensation has arrived from Rome; but you may suppose that such a wedding requires the presence, or at least the better health, of a grandmother, who has contributed so much towards it. The marriage of M. de Luxembourg is still irremediably broken off; his conduct is highly blamed, and the more so, as it is believed to be a sacrifice he wishes to make to the Marquise de Bellefonds. But Madame de Seignelai has not merited such treatment: yet nothing would be said against the Marquise should she become a great Duchesse. It is certain that the Duc has always been very attentive to her; and that the Marquise has always said that she should see M. de Luxembourg and Madame de Seignelai go to church together to be married, without thinking, for all that, that the marriage would take place; which has even led the world to say, that she has been married to M. de Luxembourg for more than six months ago; and that M. de Luxembourg, not daring to make it known to his mother, listened to the proposals that were made to him merely to gain time: with a little patience we shall know more. I was told, yesterday, that the marriage of little Saint-Hérem with the little cousin of Madame (la Maréchale) de Lorges was concluded. That of Mademoiselle de Clérembault with little Guéméné is quite at an end. The Duchesse de Rohan has the small-pox, in Brittany. This is all I know, my dearest gouvernante. I have only, therefore, to embrace you with infinite affection, and to protest to you that I am more yours than my own. I request your good offices for me with your daughter, and all the illustrious inhabitants of your Royal Château. How is the Chevalier? I ask his pardon, but I have no gout; and yet I drink, like a fish, of every sort of wine that can promote it. It is not so with M. de Nevers, who is at length returned from Nevers with his lovely wife, after having been at the point of death there. The humour of the gout, which lurks in all the secret channels of his body,

gives him extraordinary complaints. He set out, the day before yesterday, for the neighbourhood of Roche-Guyon, to consult *Christophe aux ânes,* who is a labourer, but has admirable skill in the cure of all disorders, from his knowledge of simples, which he inherits from his father; and which, in default of children, he will leave to his nephew: in short, cancers, gravel, abscesses, ulcers, all fly before him; nothing is talked of but the wonderful cures he has performed, and of his disinterestedness. He gives medicines to the poor gratis; he makes the rich pay no more than their value for them; and asks no other reward than a crown, or half-a-crown, which he puts into a box for the poor. He will not come into this country, nor does he wish persons to build in his neighbourhood. He has cured the Duc de Gramont, and Turmenies; the latter sent him a hundred pistoles, which he immediately returned.

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*LETTER 1066

From Monsieur DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, February 3, 1696.

The reports we hear of the continuance of Madame de Grignan's ill health, afflict me to such a degree, both on your account, my dear gouvernante, and on hers, that I have not the heart to send you the second volume of our weddings. Letters are only agreeable according to the time in which they arrive; make, therefore, of this the use which may be suitable to its season, and be firmly assured, whatever style I may adopt, that my heart does its duty as to everything that concerns you and the excellent Comtesse. After this, I will tell you that the marriage of the Duc d'Albret and Mademoiselle de La Trémouille took place on Tuesday evening; and that it would certainly have been a more joyful one, but for the illness of the Duchesse de Créqui, which has increased from that period, for even yesterday she was in danger; I have not yet heard how she is to-day. The Créqui Mansion, however, was

splendidly furnished and illuminated; there were two tables of fifteen or sixteen covers each, so well and so delicately served, that it is even said that they surpassed those at M. de Barbesieux's wedding. The young people, to amuse themselves, danced to songs, a custom which is now very much in vogue at Court; whoever chose played at cards, and whoever chose listened to a pretty concert by Vizé, Marais, Descôteaux, and Philibert: this lasted till midnight; the marriage was celebrated in the Chapel of the Créqui Mansion. There were more friends than relations at this wedding; this also is a custom introduced for the sake of the consequences; and I can tell you that I was scolded for not being there; but I had rather be scolded on such an occasion, than run the risk of being as welcome as a dog at a game of nine pins. I saw all the bride-folks next morning, and was well received by all the Bouillons and Trémouilles. The door of the Créqui Mansion has only been open to the public on account of the visits of Monsieur and Madame, and of their children, who did not fail upon this occasion to compliment their near relations: till this lucky moment it was shut to all who presented themselves, because of Madame de Créqui's illness: the lady visitors are consoled by this, for the trouble it gave them to equip themselves in their black dresses, half repugnance, and half laziness. Mademoiselle de Villars, daughter of the poor Duchesse of this name, on the same day married her cousin de Brancas [1]. But these are not the only marriages: M. and Madame de Clérembault laid such good hold of M de Luxembourg, as soon as he had broken with Madame de Seignelai, that at length the marriage is fixed. Mademoiselle de Clérembault [2] is to have half a million francs now, and a hundred thousand in jewels, to be valued by three of the most famous jewellers of Paris. I saw some persons, yesterday, who were present at Madame de Clérembaults, at the visit she re-

[1] Afterwards Maréchal of France, and a Spanish grandee.

[2] Marie Gillonne Gillier, second wife of Charles François-Frédéric de Montmorenci, Duc de Luxembourg, and only daughter of René Gillier, Marquis de Clérembault, and of Marie Le Loup de Bellenave.

ceived from M. de Luxembourg, his mother, and his whole family; so that the affair is absolutely concluded; I know not what the Marquise de Bellefonds will say upon the subject; but thus the Clérembaults are consoled. The public wishes Madame de Seignelai to enter into some negotiation with M. de Marsan; I speak only from report. The young St.-Hérem is on Sunday to marry the little cousin of Madame (la Maréchale) de Lorges. The Duchesse de S. S**** is always pregnant, and proves thereby that there is nothing impossible in this world. But can you guess who is entering my room? The Marquis de Grignan in person, who has had the goodness to honour my levee, weary, as he says, of seeking for me in vain in the afternoon: is not this very obliging? To reward him for his trouble, I shall take him to dine some day at Cardinal de Bouillon's, who has but one cry after him, on account, ladies, of you, and of all who bear the name of Grignan, whom he loves and honours. We went together (that is, the Cardinal and I) to a wonderful dinner at the Duchesse du Lude's, last Sunday, where I enumerated to the Cardinal all your compliments, which he received with infinite joy and gratitude. I am charged to give you a great many from him, till we meet together quietly at Saint-Martin's, to write to you jointly in the same letter, as he has long intended to do. Have you heard that he has advised so well with the King and his monks, that he believes the exchange of his Mansion-House of Saint-Martin against another in Pontoise for the monks who will succeed him, certain? In like manner, he made a noble present of his beautiful house and gardens to the Duc d'Albret, the day after his marriage, by a settlement in form, to come to him after his death; with this reserve, that it is to be a residence for the Duchesse his wife, as long as she remains a widow: it is their interest, however, that the Cardinal should enjoy it long; for, considering it as a fund secured to his heirs, he will never be very extravagant there. The Comte du Luxe[1], to whom the King, according to the

[1] Paul-Sigismond de Montmorenci-Luxembourg, Comte du Luxe, afterwards Duc de Châtillon, third son of Maréchal de Luxembourg.

promise he made to the late Maréchal de Luxembourg, has granted a Duc's *brevet*, is still, it is said, to marry Mademoiselle de Bosmelet with four hundred thousand francs down, and three hundred thousand in reversion; but the marriage has not yet taken place [1]; the lady does not appear to me very agreeable; and the family of Luxembourg, it is also said, are not very much delighted at the alliance. This, ladies, is all I have to tell you; but, for heaven's sake, send me some good tidings of the health of our Comtesse, if you wish me to continue my long letters. I saw the good La Troche, the day before yesterday, who is much better. Our amiable Lenclos has a cold, which does not please me: indeed, colds are prevalent everywhere. Madame de Soubise has been a great sufferer; but adieu, I am going to dine at the Chaulnes' Mansion. I have hitherto expected, in vain, a summons from my Cardinal to sleep at Pontoise; but the illness of Madame de Créqui may have detained him; he was not very well himself; this will make me take the road of the Faubourg St.-Germain after dinner. On Friday next, if my *wandering star* permits, you shall have the rest.

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*LETTER 1067

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the President* DE MOULCEAU.

Grignan, Saturday, February 4, 1696.

I was right, Sir, when I supposed you would be concerned at my anxiety, and would use all the diligence in your power to relieve it. M. Barbeyrac's prescription and your letter had wings, as you wished; and it seems that this little fever, which appeared so low, had wings too, for it vanished at the bare mention of M. Barbeyrac's name. Seriously, Sir, there is something miraculous in this sud-

[1] This marriage did not take place. On the 6th of March following, the Duc de Châtillon married Marie-Antoine de La Trémouille, Marquise de Royan, Comtesse d'Olonne.

den change; and I cannot doubt that your wishes and your prayers contributed to produce it. Judge of my gratitude by their effect. My daughter goes halves with me in all I say here: she returns you a thousand thanks, and entreats you to give a great many to M. Barbeyrac. We are happy in having no longer anything to do, but to take patience and rhubarb, which she finds agree well with her. We doubt not that in this quiet state, rhubarb is a medicine which M. Barbeyrac must approve, with a regimen, which is sometimes better than all. Thank God, Sir, both for yourself and for us; for we are certain that you are interested in this acknowledgment; and then, Sir, cast your eyes upon all the inhabitants of this Castle, and judge of their sentiments for you.

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*LETTER 1068

From Monsieur DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Saint-Martin's, February 17, 1696.

But why not write to me sometimes *in folio,* when you meet with a large noble sheet that invites you to do so? I here received the long and short letter you had the goodness to write me on the same day in answer to all mine; and I am still, my dear gouvernante, delighted with your style, and your good and faithful correspondence. I have been here almost a fortnight with my adored Cardinal, and for almost a fortnight I have been the happiest man in the world; good society, good fires everywhere, a thousand games, a noble table, delicious wines: in short, this is literally the Land of Plenty. The very servants of this house have a rage for improvements, though they are masters of their art; so that they will make us burst at last. They were supremely skilled in the most excellent ragoûts of France and Italy; yet have they bound themselves apprentices to the best cook in England, to become more expert in English ragoûts than he. We no longer know where we are; all our ragoûts speak different languages; but they

make themselves so well understood, that we eat them in whatever shape and in whatever sauce they present themselves. You see plainly, Madame, that the single article of good cheer would require a *folio.* Indeed, this is an admirable house, and the master of it cannot be sufficiently adored: I have not failed to make him all your compliments; and I only write to you from here, because I believe the moment arrived in which he can answer you for himself, as he has often expressed a desire to do. We have had a great many brothers, nephews, and nieces here during the last week; but, since Monday, the Cardinal is reduced to his two faithful companions: the worthy Richard Hamilton for one, and the young Coulanges for the other; and you cannot imagine how well he reconciles himself to his solitude; so well, indeed, that we hear no more of what passes at Paris and at Court, than if we were at La Trappe. This, therefore, is a separate volume from the rest of my letters; from my ignorance, whether all the fixed marriages have been solemnized, or the proposed ones have taken place, or are in a fair way to do so. You heard that Madame de Créqui was at the point of death, and you afterwards heard of her resurrection, which gave extreme joy to the Cardinal; her long life being very necessary to the happiness of the Duc and Duchesse d'Albret; and it is since this resurrection that the Cardinal has renounced the news of the world to attend to himself, and to an infinite number of workmen, who are all labouring incessantly to complete one of the most beautiful gardens in Europe. I am delighted at the better health of our Comtesse: her having wished to read my letters herself, and to give them their proper tones and emphasis, is a very good sign of life. You assure me that she laughed heartily at some passages, and that the President's lady who was *baked* did not displease her. But I cannot help wondering, my dear ladies, that you, who are so conversant in history, and so well informed with respect to the noble houses of France, should not know that the house of Douilly is divided into two branches; that one produced the young Marquise de

Sainte-Hérem, and the other lady whom M. de P**** has just espoused; so that they were two *cousines-germaines,* married almost at the same time. One, a brilliant beauty, the daughter of a Frémont, who gave her a Madame (la Maréchale) de Lorges for a *cousine-germaine,* and the Duchesses de Saint-Simon and de Lauzun for nieces, after the mode of Brittany, entered into the house of Montmorin. The other, less ambitious, was content with that of the house of Ber***, though her mother had married again to M. de l'Hôpital, and thus is the enigma, the solution of which you have required of me, developed. We have still two months to remain here, they will pass rapidly; as soon as I am at Paris, I shall renew my correspondence, and give you the continuation of the preceding volumes. I wish you may find in it the marriage of Mademoiselle de Bagnols and M. de Poissi; but this child is so difficult to baptize, that I dare not hope for the conclusion, though I have been informed that the affair was in good train. Adieu, ladies; I am going to place my paper before Cardinal de Bouillon, that he may illuminate, at least, the remainder of this page, and so give a value to the letter above what it at present possesses. A thousand compliments, I entreat you, and a thousand respects, to all the inhabitants of your Royal Château. Madame de Simiane is welcome to leave my letters unanswered; but I could at least have wished to receive some commands from her to the Duchesse de Villeroi, who wrote to her so prettily in my letter, and who inquires for her daily.

The Cardinal DE BOUILLON *writes to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.
(*In Monsieur* DE COULANGES'S *letter.*)

It is less humiliating to me, Madame, to own ingenuously the fault I have committed, in having given no sign of life, on the occasion of the two happy marriages, either to you, or to any of the family of Grignan; all of whom I love and honour infinitely: it is less humilitating, I say, to own this, than to attempt to add anything to M. de Coulanges's letter, which is worthy both of you and of him. I

must, however, assure you that you have not a servant in the world who is more truly devoted to you than I am.

Monsieur DE COULANGES *continues and concludes his letter to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Our cousin de Pracontal is on the point of setting out for Montélimart: she will pay you a visit, and will have no desire to renounce her relations; her mother had never told her we were cousins, and, but for me, she would still be ignorant of it. She is a very charming woman; she is to spend some months in the country, for which I am sorry, for I began to like her extremely: her husband also is not without merit; but he will not suffer her out of his sight. If this proceeds from affection, I have nothing to say against it, though such affection is sometimes very inconvenient: if from jealousy, it is the result of Madame de Montchevreuil's devotion to her daughter, whose fault it has not been that she has not ruined her with her husband, and with everyone else. I am certain you will find our cousin a very reasonable being; that you will like her much, and will not be sorry to display to her all the magnificence of Grignan. She has desired me to say a good word for her; and I beg you will tell her, when you see her, that I have done so both in terms of affection and praise. Her husband will fix her near Lyons, during the campaign, with Madame Busseaux, her sister-in-law.

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*LETTER 1069

From M. DE COULANGES *to Mesdames* DE SÉVIGNÉ *and* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, February 20, 1696.

I send this skiff after the ship that has left Saint-Martin's, to tell you, in the first place, that I am arrived here; and that I received on Saturday evening, at the time I least expected it, letters upon letters, informing me that Madame de Louvois was attacked with colic last Tuesday; that the fits had been so violent and painful, that the last, which took place on Friday evening, had occasioned great alarm, and brought together all her relations and friends. I therefore, without a moment's hesitation, left Saint-Martin's yesterday, at four o'clock in the morning, to repair to her and to my duty. I found her very much weakened, but freed from violent pain, by bleeding and the medicines that had been administered. She is obliged, however, to keep in bed without moving, and even without talking much, for fear of increasing the pains she constantly feels, but which are less difficult to bear than those which come by fits. You thus see, ladies, that everyone in this world has his sorrows and miseries. I was very well received, and my zeal was highly commended. Though this illness does not appear to be dangerous, for Madame de Louvois was much better yesterday, towards midnight. I shall be detained here for a few days at least. I was very sorry to be obliged to leave Saint-Martin's, because on Saturday, after dinner, the Duc and Duchesse d'Albret very unceremoniously and very kindly came to surprise the Cardinal, against his orders; for he did not wish the Duchesse to see Saint-Martin's before the spring: this is the whim of a master of a house, which you can very easily understand: but he was not sorry, however, for the surprise, which made him determine upon staying two days longer to explain to them at least all that would embellish

his house and gardens at the ensuing season, and I was very necessary to second him. The new-married folks would have been delighted to meet me, and yesterday was set apart, between the pots and pans, to form an intimate acquaintance with the Duchesse, who is so shaped, so courteous, so polite, so well-educated, that she is in my eyes a finished beauty, though she is far from handsome, and has only to boast the finest and most dignified figure that was ever seen. This, ladies, is the first part of my discourse; which would not, however, dispatch the skiff, if the second, that of making honourable reparation as speedily as possible to Madame de Simiane, did not press hard upon me. I spent yesterday with the Duchesse de Villeroi, who, asking me if I had not heard from her, told me she had received a very delightful answer from her; I immediately thanked the Duchesse for having informed me of the good news, and explained to her the reason; for I did not like that Madame de Simiane should be no longer the exact and punctual Pauline: I am delighted, as you may suppose, that she retains all her perfections; and I ask pardon for having suspected her of this peccadillo. The Duchesse de Villeroi grows very handsome and very lovely; I was therefore sorry that the flint did not strike fire. I have found the mania for marriage raging here: to-morrow that of M. de Marsan and Madame de Seignelai will take place; they mutually club their furniture, and the possession of a hundred thousand livres a year is settled on the survivor, in case there should be no children. The public loudly blames Madame de Seignelai; many think that to be her own mistress, and to enjoy an income of seventy thousand livres a year, was a very happy lot; while others forgive her for having wished to resign it for the distinguished rank she will hold, and for a husband with whom they are sure, she will live happily. After having wished to marry M. de Luxembourg, she would not have been thought the better of for passing the remainder of her days in widowhood; and her intention, no doubt, has been, to console herself and her family at the same time. To-

morrow, at midnight, this grand ceremony will be performed. The marriage of Villacerf's son with Mademoiselle de Brinon-Senneterre, will also take place to-morrow. We do not clearly understand the humour of M. and Madame de Brinon's taste, who give up fifty thousand crowns; but this is how everything goes in this world. The marriage of Mademoiselle de Royan with the Comte de Luxe, now Duc de Châtillon, is confirmed. A match is also talked of between Mademoiselle de Bosmelet and the young Duc de La Force, who might well pass for her son. On my arrival here, I found the marriage of Mademoiselle de Bagnols and M. de Poissi turned a little aside, I know not by whose fault; there are a pro and a con in all this. Adieu, ladies; I adore and embrace you.

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*LETTER 1070

From Monsieur DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SIMIANE.

Paris, February 27, 1696.

You are deficient in nothing, divine Pauline, and I ask your pardon for having suspected your punctuality, as I did. I shall take care, in future, how I commit the same egregious fault. I will not pass for a peevish little man with you; and you may write again at your ease, and sometimes even not answer me at all, without my feeling offended. Some slight correspondence must take place between us, to keep up our acquaintance; but it must be free, and you may employ it when the fancy takes you: is not this well said? I have been at Paris for a week, devoting almost all my time to Madame de Louvois, who is indeed free from colic; but who has been so badly managed, and is so oppressed with vapours, that she recovers slowly. The Portuguese Ambassador yesterday made his solemn entrance at Paris, through the Saint-Antoine gate, and went round the Place Royale: the poor people of Paris

are so greedy of spectacles, that this entry, which would not have been regarded at another time, was quite a treat to them. The Ambassador's livery is grey with silver lace, turned up with blue; he has four beautiful carriages; and, to the disgrace of France, these carriages and horses were sent to compose his retinue. Notwithstanding this, it was impossible to stir in the streets for the concourse of people. The Place Royale, with carpets at every window and in every balcony, was not one of the worst places in the city to show to the Ambassador: he therefore made the circuit of it; saw a beautiful and noble company on the balcony of the Chaulnes' Mansion, where Cardinal de Bouillon, the Duchesses de La Trémouille and d'Albret, Madame de Coulanges, the Abbé Têtu, the Abbé d'Auvergne, Comte d'Albret, and I, had dined; and where many other persons of consequence repaired, after dinner, to view the sight; among others, the Chevalier de Bouillon, who was presented to your friend Madame de Coulanges, and whom she was obliged to kiss, as a very extraordinary man. I am now going to dine at Montmartre, where M. and Madame de Nevers, more beautiful and more lovely than ever, have made an appointment with me. I suppose I shall not be very hungry when I return. I must not, however, fail to be at M. de Lamoignon's this evening, even if I were to burst for it. Say not a word of the life I lead, to the Chevalier de Grignan; for it gives such offence to the gouty, that there is no misfortune they do not wish me. M. de Saint-Géran was lately so much offended at seeing me insolently stamp with my foot, at a time when he could not move for the gout, that he would have strangled me if he could. Nothing certainly is more extraordinary than the young and flourishing state I enjoy: you lose a great deal in not being here to see me; how we would dance together to the songs! It is a fashionable amusement. M. and Madame de Marsan are gone to Versailles; nothing is equal to their happiness: but are not you, divine Pauline, happy indeed, in not having married M. de Lauzun, who, without rhyme or reason, has fixed his wife there? We

hear stories of him without end, and which I have not time to write to you. The marriage of the new Duc de Châtillon and Mademoiselle de Royan is to take place on Shrove Monday. The good Madame de Bouteville [1] has sent her jewels, valued at eighty thousand francs. There is not a happier marriage than M. de Luxembourg's, who has lost his grand-daughter by the first marriage, to the great satisfaction of those who inherit after her. M. and Madame de Pracontal set out on Sunday to see you. I recommend Madame de Pracontal to you, who is our cousin, and whom I love as my life; I am very much grieved at her quitting us; you will find her an amiable woman and an excellent companion. She will spend much of her time out of Paris, or I am greatly mistaken. M. de Marillac has lost a brother-Abbé. MONSEIGNEUR is at Meudon. The King goes on Wednesday to Marly; and the jubilee, against wind and tide, will begin next Sunday, which is a great grief to the people, who are accustomed to pass the three days of Shrove-tide otherwise than in prayer. Father de La Ferté, a Jesuit, who preached with a success much beyond his age and rank, has, by a laudable zeal, which proves his vocation, obtained permission from his superiors to go into Canada [2]. Adieu, lovely and divine Pauline; I have nothing more to add. I am delighted at your mother's better health; but we dare not flatter ourselves that we shall see her here till the end of autumn, and this is plunging us into Lent at once.

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[1] Elisabeth-Angélique de Vienne, grandmother of the Duc de Châtillon, was the widow of François de Montmorenci, Comte de Bouteville: she died on the 6th of August following, at the age of eighty-nine, having passed sixty-nine years in widowhood.

[2] Father de La Ferté did not take advantage of the permission of his superiors, on account of the objection of his relations. He was the second son of Maréchal de La Ferté and Madeleine d'Angennes, to whom the *Amours des Gaules* gave too much notoriety.

*LETTER 1071

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the President* DE MOULCEAU.

Grignan, February 29, 1696.

You are not yet quit of us, Sir. It is easier to have no correspondence with us, than to put a stop to that I have established, slight as it may be. I feel as if civility obliged me to tell you, that we are very sorry that at the time we were so ill (for I always speak in the plural) you took the liberty to be ill also. We feel too that we owe to rhubarb, to which we consider ourselves so much obliged, this justice, at least, of not suffering it to be condemned without being heard: this is what I have done in the note I send to M. Barbeyrac. I have not added your name, Sir, from modesty; but from the friendship I entertain for you, and that which I flatter myself you entertain for us, I do not seal the note, and I entreat you to have the goodness to read it, and to make M. Barbeyrac understand it; for I do not write methodically, and you alone can explain it. Have, therefore, this charity, Sir; you will not seek far to find in your own heart all the goodness which is necessary to make you excuse such liberties. I have a third reason for writing to you. I must send you a letter which I have cheated our dear Corbinelli's philosophy out of: he has given me the name of *reprobate,* which I had forgotten, and which you so well deserved. Adieu, then, illustrious *reprobate*; never was such a character so perfectly esteemed by mother and daughter, as it is in you. It is a taste which you will renew, as soon as we see one of your letters, however short; and the least sentence of which will present to us again a style that has so peculiarly found the secret of pleasing us.

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*LETTER 1072

From M. DE COULANGES *to Mesdames* DE SÉVIGNÉ *and* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, March 14, 1696.

The *folio* has brought me a very good *quarto*; I received it the day before yesterday, just in time to communicate its contents to my good Cardinal, who repaired to my *lever* (time of rising) at the moment I least expected it: he was delighted with your letter; and what civil things did he not say of you, and of all who bear the name of Grignan! Be you all assured, that if ever you return to this country, as I flatter myself you will, we shall show you Saint-Martin's in all its extent, and with all its unparalleled beauties. But what think you, ladies, brought the worthy Cardinal to me so early? Alas! it was to propose my return with him, and that we should go and mortify ourselves together in that charming place. But that I might duly perform my jubilee, which will not be complete till Saturday morning, it was necessary to resist this proposition courageously; and I am now fasting, in sackcloth and ashes, till Saturday after dinner, when a little chaise will take me swiftly to Pontoise, where I hope to spend some time, and where I shall wish for you incessantly. In the midst, however, of my sackcloth and ashes, I must sup this evening at Penautier's [1] where I cannot and will not fail, as M. and Madame de Marsan are to be of the party; and I shall be delighted to drink, and renew my acquaintance, with them. The Duchesse du Lude, and all the Lamoignons, are also to be there: how, therefore, can I excuse myself? I refer the matter, most excellent gouvernante, to yourself.

To proceed: our Chaulnes' Mansion shines as much during Lent, as it shone during the feast-days; they cer-

[1] Receiver-General of the clergy of France, whose house was famous for good cheer.

tainly live there in style. The good Duc still goes heavily on his way; but it is to be hoped that Vichy, if he goes there, will lighten his portmanteau, which is certainly too full, as well as mine; but as I am younger than he, and take more exercise, I am less inconvenienced. As we shall have been a long time without seeing each other, I fear, ladies, that when you come here, you will find me of an enormous size; but what of that? you will not think me less welcome, nor less bound to love and honour you all my life. I saw goody La Troche the day before yesterday, who is collecting all the waste paper in the world to send to you; and we had very nearly quarrelled, because I told her it was not necessary; and that she should leave it to the Abbé Bigorre, the most exact and regular correspondent in the world; and that it was making you pay postage, which it would be better to spare you: am I right? am I wrong? I suppose the news of the visionary armies in Brittany reached you long ago, and that you laugh at the gravity with which M. de Lavardin has reported this vision at Court: I was unwilling, therefore, to send you any account of it, as well as of a thousand songs which are in circulation, each more vile and ridiculous than the preceding one: as I have no share in them, I do not burden myself with such merchandise, and particularly in this holy time of Lent.

But Madame du Pui-du-Fou is dead; ought I not to condole with M. de Grignan[1] in form upon the event? I beg you to say for me everything that is necessary upon the occasion; and to tell him how much I am alive to all the good and ill that happens to him. I saw the Duchesse Dowager de Lesdiguières at the Chaulnes' Mansion, more brilliant than ever: I asked her, if the door of her house would never be open to me? and from the tone she assumed, you would have said that it was my fault if I did not see her often, and that I had only to present myself at this door for it to open immediately: and yet her daughter-

[1] M. de Grignan's second wife was the daughter of Madame du Pui-du-Fou.

in-law is in greater seclusion than ever. She has one of the most disagreeable faces I know; I prefer, a thousand times, the Duchesse d'Albret, who has the carriage and figure of a divinity. The Duchesse de Richelieu has been so ill lately, of a violent cold attended with fever and an alarming cough, that she has lain-in of a seven months' child; it is a lively boy, however, and delights the Duc his father, as much as he afflicts the Marquis de Richelieu: but will he live? it is very doubtful. We have no good news from England; we run the risk of seeing King James shortly. It is affirmed, that the Prince of Orange has always been very well informed; and that he has not apeared to be so, to draw us into the snare. His fleet was yesterday so near Calais, that it was expected every moment that it would set fire to all the ships, and bombard the town. This fatal moment depended on the tide; it is said that all our frigates are safe under the battery of Dunkirk: we shall soon know more.

Adieu, ladies; this is all you will have to-day: and it is a great deal, whatever you may say; for my letters are not so wonderful as you wish to make me believe. Be assured, I still expect you here with great impatience. Fie, fie, upon the calf's head, feet, and tripe! can anything be more indigestible? Believe me, my dear gouvernante, it is a very unreasonable attachment you have formed for this dish; and I advise you, for your health's sake, to get rid of it as soon as possible. I pardon Madame de Simiane for not having written to me on Shrove-Tuesday; I can easily conceive how busy she must have been on that day, to shine at the ball, and to lay down the law to all the ladies of Vauréas. I am very much flattered by her wishing to honour me with a more affectionate appellation than that of *Sir*; I had resolved to ask her to call me *Pierrot*, instead of it. Let her baptize me with any name her friendship may suggest; and let her be assured I deserve some distinction, on account of the respect and admiration I entertain for the prudent Pauline. Sanzei sends you a thousand compliments, and a thousand thanks for the honour

of your remembrance, in whatever shape it be: he has done his day's work so well, that M. de Saint-Amand's is become his own house; he is there from morning to night. I cannot say enough of the ruin of the family of Saint H**** [1]; they owe four hundred thousand francs more than they declared: they could willingly stone Madame de Saint-H****, when they discover new articles of expense, which they had never heard of. The young people are going to renounce everything, and to depend solely upon the reversion of the government of F****, and their commission, which they retain. M. de Saint-Amand has married his daughter much better than M. de Douilly; but look at the *Mercure Galant* for February, and you will see what the house of Douilly is. Your friend looks forward to Friday, but says a thousand things to you in the meanwhile. Madame de Créqui set out post yesterday, to fly to her beloved son Blanchefort, who is ill at Tournay.

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*LETTER 1073

From Monsieur DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, March 19, 1696.

Here now ends the chapter of marriages, and begins the chapter of deaths. Madame de Guise [2] departed this world on Saturday, towards midnight. She was only taken ill on the Tuesday, of a violent fever and inflammation on the lungs; it was scarcely possible to be taken off more rapidly. She died at Versailles, in full possession of her senses, and in perfect resignation: the King saw her two hours before she died: after a tolerably long conversation, he left the room overwhelmed with grief,

[1] These initials signify Saint-Hérem; and the F****, that follows, is Fontainebleau, of which M. de Saint-Hérem was Governor.

[2] Elisabeth d'Orléans, daughter of Gaston de France, Duc d'Orléans, uncle of Louis XIV., by Marguerite de Lorraine-Vaudemont, his second wife. She was born on the 26th of December, 1646, and was married in 1676 to Louis Joseph, Duc de Guise.

and bathed in tears; and the next day, that is yesterday, he set out for Marly, where he will remain till Saturday evening. Poor Madame de Créqui must have found a messenger upon the road, who prevented her from going to Tournay. Her son died there at the age of twenty-seven, with unparalleled courage: it is a great loss to his family, and particularly to his mother, who will die of grief, if grief can kill; and Madame du Plessis-Bellière will die, if her daughter dies.

But do you know who died suddenly yesterday? M. de Saint-Géran. He went to confession on Wednesday, intending to complete his jubilee yesterday; he fasted on Friday and Saturday for this purpose; and yesterday morning, without illness or pain of any kind, he went to St. Paul's, his Parish Church. As he was in the confessional, he suddenly fell down; assistance was given him, and every remedy that could be administered in a church; but his senses not returning, he was carried to the house of an apothecary opposite the great gate of St. Paul's, and he died as he entered it. As soon as I heard the melancholy intelligence, I went to his house, and found that he had breathed his last: he will be buried this evening, at St. Paul's; and to-morrow I intend going to Versailles, to pay my duty to Madame de Saint-Géran, who, in all probability, will console herself for his loss, and will not perhaps bear the thought of being deprived for a time of playing day and night at *lansquenet,* as she has done for some years. Our friend has always lived from day to day, without bestowing a thought upon the future. God grant she may find it answer in the end; but I do not think Mademoiselle de Saint-Géran will ever be a great heiress.

I know not how the affairs of England go on; the Comtesse de Fiesque is the only one who has a good opinion of them, and is still certain that they will end well. I have taken three meals at the Marsans', which agree very well with me; I shall put their whole family into my basket. M. de Marsan always reminds his wife that she is no longer Madame de Seignelai; and that, being only Madame de

Marsan, she must accommodate herself to all his friends, of whatever form or rank, and let everyone live after his own way. I am to go on Saturday to Saint-Martin's; and to-morrow I shall go to Versailles, to condole with my friend, and pass the day with Mesdames de Villeroi and Mademoiselle de Bouillon, whom I shall find there. Madame de Guise has ordered her funeral to be conducted without ceremony, and has preferred the burial ground of the Carmelites of the great convent, to all the pomp of Saint-Denis, with the Kings her ancestors: she was only forty-nine years of age. Father de La Ferté will preach again on Wednesday; and on Friday, without saying a word, he will set off for Canada. If he were not to take his departure in this way, it would cause a tumult, he is so much liked by the populace: the church of the Jesuits was too small for the multitude which crowded to his sermons.

I have just been dining at the Chaulnes' Mansion, where I met the Marquis de Grignan: he can tell you that I was not in a very ill humour. Madame (la Maréchale) de Villeroi yesterday announced to Madame de Saint-Géran the death of her husband; and the Duc has taken upon himself the charge of the funeral this evening: he will probably be the privileged creditor on the inheritance; for he will advance, no doubt, what is necessary for the ceremony. This is all I know, Madame; I therefore conclude, and take leave of you till my return from Saint-Martin's, which will be when it pleases God. Madame de Coulanges is free from the colic; she only complains that she has sometimes the *little colic,* which does not prevent her from eating and drinking, and associating with the young: she is very partial to the Chevalier de Bouillon and Comte d'Albret; and she was delighted to meet M. de Marsan again, with whom she has renewed a snuff acquaintance. Winter is come back within these two days; it has snowed, and frozen in such a manner, that we must expect no apricots; I fear the peaches also will suffer. Madame de Frontenac has a violent cold and fever; the fashion of dying, alarms us for her. Our poor Lenclos has also a

slow fever, which returns slightly every evening, with a sore throat, that makes her friends uneasy; in short, I very much fear that the work of death is not at an end.

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*LETTER 1074

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Monsieur* DE COULANGES.

Grignan, March 29, 1696[1].

When I have no other employment, I weep and bewail aloud the death of de Blanchefort, that amiable, that excellent youth, who was held up to all our young people as a model for imitation. A reputation completely established, valour acknowledged and worthy of his name, a disposition happy for himself, (for a bad disposition is a torment to its possessor), for his friends, and for his family; alive to the affection of his mother and his grandmother, loving them, honouring them, appreciating their merit, taking pleasure in proving to them his gratitude, and thereby repaying them for their extreme affection; uniting good sense with a fine person; not vain of his youth, as most young people are, who seem to think themselves paragons of perfection: and this dear boy, with all his perfections, gone in a moment, like a blossom borne away by the wind, without being in battle, without having an opportunity to fight, and without breathing even an unhealthy air! Where, my dear cousin, can we find words to express our ideas of the grief of these two mothers, and to convey to them an adequate sense of what we feel here? We do not think of writing to them; but if at anytime you should have an opportunity of mentioning my daughter, and me, and the Grignans, make known our regret at this

[1] As the death of Madame de Sévigné happened about the middle of April, it is probable that this letter is the last she wrote. We consider its recovery as a fortunate circumstance. See Letter 761, of 25th April, 1687, in the sixth volume.

irreparable misfortune. Madame de Vins has lost everything, I own [1]; for when the heart has chosen between two sons, one only is seen. I can talk of nothing else. I bow in reverence to the holy and modest tomb of Madame de Guise, whose renunciation of that of the Kings her ancestors, merits an eternal crown. I think M. de Saint-Géran happy indeed; and so I think you, for having to comfort his wife: say to her for us everything you think proper. And as for Madame de Miramion, that Mother of the Church, she will be a public loss. Adieu, my dear cousin, I cannot change my tone. You have finished your jubilee. The delightful trip to Saint-Martin's has closely followed the sackcloth and ashes you mentioned to me. The happiness M. and Madame de Marsan are now enjoying, well deserves that you should sometimes see them, and put them into your basket; and I deserve a place in that in which you put those who love you; but I fear, that for them you have no basket.

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[1] Madame de Vins had lost an only son.

*LETTER 1075

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, April 6, 1696.

I shall show your letter to Madame de Créqui; the only pleasure she has left, is to hear the praises of her poor son [1]; she appears to me more afflicted than at first. I pass few days without seeing her. I have sent this delightful and affectionate letter to M. de Coulanges; he is at Saint-Martin's, from whence he is to return on Tuesday. Madame de Saint-Géran has received two visits from Madame de Maintenon; you will suppose that she did not require so much as this to comfort her. Madame de Mornai is still with Madame de Maintenon; the more insensible this little woman appears to the honours she receives, the more attention seems to be paid her: I am astonished at this conduct on both sides. The marriage of my niece to M. de Poissi [2] is completely at an end; she will set out for Flanders in a week. M. and Madame de Bagnols are not to blame; Madame de Maisons [3] did also what she could; and we shall always think ourselves highly obliged to her. I am delighted at being acquainted with her: she has a good heart, and true generosity. We must hope our young lady will be well married [4]; but it cannot be till the return from the campaign, for no gownsman will now suit us. I must finish this little note as speedily as possible, for Madame de Montespan is coming to take me at day-break to hear Father de La Ferté (a Jesuit), who preaches like a Bourdaloue, and who resembles the Duc his brother so much, that it is impossible to help laughing at the discources they

[1] Nicolas Charles de Créqui, Marquis de Blanchefort, died at Tournay on the 16th of March, 1696, at the age of twenty-seven.

[2] Claude Longueil, Marquis de Poissi and de Maisons, President *à mortier* in the Parliament of Paris.

[3] Louise Fieubet, mother of M. de Poissi.

[4] She was married in 1699 to the Comte de Tillières.

hold together. Madame de Fontevrault[1] is also coming; I hear many sermons in company with these great folks, who are to set out in a week for Bourbon. The more slowly Madame de Grignan recovers where she is, the more reason there is that she should change the air with all speed; exclusive of the interest I have in giving this advice, it is the opinion of all judicious persons. When, too, shall we again see Madame de Simiane? She cares little about it; she has amusement in abundance, while we sigh for her here. Be assured, my love, I shall not fail to give your compliments, and those of M. and Madame de Grignan, to Madame de Créqui. The King has made a present of two thousand louis to Maréchal de Choiseul, to assist him in the expenses of his equipage: I know not whether the Marquis de Grignan will go with him. Adieu, my true friend, a hasty adieu; I am called away.

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*LETTER 1076

From Monsieur DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SIMIANE.

Paris, April 25, 1696.

Far from taking it unkindly, Madame, that you did not write to me with your own hand, I am very much surprised that you even thought of me at a time so cruel and so fatal as the present[2]. I did not doubt your sensibility at the loss we have sustained; and I could easily conceive what it would cost your excellent heart. God of heaven, what a blow is this to us all! for myself, I am lost in the thought that I shall no longer see the dear cousin, to whom I have been from infancy so affectionately attached, and

[1] Sister of Madame de Montespan.

[2] Madame de Sévigné had died of the small-pox on the 17th of April.

who returned this attachment so tenderly and so faithfully. If you could see, Madame, all that passes here, you would be still better acquainted with the merit of your grandmother, for never was worth more truly acknowledged than hers; and the public renders her, with pious regret, all the honour which is due to her. Madame de Coulanges is grieved to an excess that it is impossible to describe, and I tremble for its effect on her own health. From the day that announced to us the fatal illness, which in the end took our friend from us for ever, we have lost all peace of mind. The Duchesse de Chaulnes is almost dead, and poor Madame de La Troche—[1]. In short, we meet together to weep, and to regret what we have lost; and in the midst of our grief, we are not without anxiety for the health of your mother. Do not write to me; order one of your meanest attendants to inform us how you are: I entreat you to believe that your mother's health and your own are very precious to me, for more reasons than one; for I think I owe it to the memory of Madame de Sévigné, to be more attached to you and Madame de Grignan than before, from knowing so well the sentiments she entertained for her and for you. I shall not write to your mother for a long time, for fear of increasing her grief by my letters; but omit me not, whenever an opportunity offers; make mention of my name; be assured that of all your servants, relations, friends, no one is more deeply afflicted than I am, no one feels a greater interest in all that concerns you. I shall not show your letter immediately to Madame de Coulanges; but I shall not fail to tell her that you do not forget her. I can assure you, that you owe her this justice on account of her love for you. Allow me to pay my sad compliments to M. de Simiane, the Chevalier de Grignan, and M. de La Garde. Heavens, what a scene in this Royal Château! Poor Mademoiselle de Martillac too, who has so well discharged all the duties of friendship, how I feel for her!

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[1] This sentence is left uncompleted.

*LETTER 1077

From Madame DE GRIGNAN *to the President* DE MOULCEAU.

April 28, 1696.

Your politeness, Sir, need not lead you to fear the renewal of my grief [1], in speaking to me of the afflicting loss I have sustained. This is an object which my mind bears constantly in view, and which is so deeply engraven in my heart, that nothing has power to increase or diminish it. I am convinced, Sir, that you could not have heard the dreadful misfortune which has happened to me, without shedding tears; I can answer for your heart: you lose a friend of incomparable merit and fidelity; nothing is more worthy of your regret; and what, Sir, do not I lose? what perfections were not united in her, to render her to me, by different characters, most dear and most precious? A loss so complete and so irreparable, leads me to seek for consolation only in the bitterness of tears and groans. I have not strength to raise my eyes to the place whence comfort flows; I can yet only cast them around me, and I no longer see the dear being who has loaded me with blessings, whose attention from day to day has been occupied in adding fresh proofs of her love to the charms of her society. It is too true, Sir, that it requires more than human fortitude to bear so cruel a disunion and so much privation. I was far from being prepared for it: the perfect health I saw her enjoy, and a year's illness, which a hundred times endangered my own life, had taken from me the idea that the order of nature could be fulfilled by her dying first. I flattered myself that I should never have this great evil to endure: it is come upon me, and I feel it in all its severity. I deserve your pity, Sir; and some share in

[1] Madame de Sévigné, as it appears, died on the 17th of April, 1696. This letter is dated the 18th of April in all the old editions, but that is an error.

the honour of your friendship, if sincere esteem and high veneration for your virtue can deserve it. My sentiments have been the same towards you, since I had the pleasure of knowing you; and I believe I have more than once told you, that it is impossible for anyone to respect you more than I do.

La Comtesse DE GRIGNAN.

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*LETTER 1078

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SIMIANE [1].

Paris, May 2, 1696.

I am truly obliged to you, Madame, for still thinking of me. I knew all your excellencies; but the affection of your heart, and the regard you have felt for a person so worthy of being beloved as she whom you regret, appear to me to be above all praise. Ah! Madame, how much reason have you to believe me to be deeply affected! I can think of no other subject; I can talk of nothing else. I am ignorant of the particulars of this fatal illness; and the eagerness with which I seek for them, shows that I have little power over myself. I spent the whole of yesterday with the Prior of St.-Catherine's; you may guess upon what our conversation turned: I showed him the letter you have done me the honour to write to me; it gave him real pleasure; for persons of his turn of mind are so convinced that this life ought only to serve as a passport to the other, that the dispositions in which we leave the

[1] In the French edition, following after the Letters of Madame de Sévigné, there are ninety-six of Madame de Simiane's (Pauline de Grignan). Most of these are addressed to the Marquis d'Héricourt and were written between the years 1714 and 1737, but as they were written so many years after the death of Madame de Sévigné, and have little or nothing to do with her or her period, it has been decided not to include them in this edition.

world are to them the only ones that are worthy of attention: but we think of what we have lost, and we lament it. For myself, I have no female friend left: my turn will soon come; it is reasonable to expect it: but to hear a person of your age entertain such serious and melancholy thoughts, is rare indeed. Your understanding, Madame, makes me forget your youth; and this, added to the natural partiality I feel for you, seems to authorise me to address you as I do.

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*LETTER 1079

From the Comte DE GRIGNAN *to Monsieur* DE COULANGES.

Grignan, May 23, 1696.

You, Sir, can understand better than anyone, the magnitude of the loss we have sustained, and my just grief. Madame de Sévigné's distinguished merit was perfectly known to you. It is not merely a mother-in-law that I regret; this name does not always command esteem: it is an amiable and excellent friend, and a delightful companion. But it is a circumstance more worthy of our admiration than our regret, that this noble-minded woman contemplated the approach of death, which she expected from the moment of her attack, with astonishing firmness and submission. She, who was so tender and so timid respecting those she loved, displayed the utmost fortitude and piety, when she believed that she ought to think only of herself; and we cannot but remark how useful and important it is, to fill the mind with good things and sacred subjects; for which Madame de Sévigné appears to have had a peculiar taste, not to say a surprising avidity, by the use she made of these excellent provisions in the last moments of her life. I relate these particulars to you, Sir, because they accord with your sentiments, and will be

THE MARQUIS DEU [illegible]

[illegible]

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*LETTER [illegible]

From the Comte [illegible] *to* [illegible] COULANGES.

[illegible]

[illegible] than anyone, the [illegible] and my just [illegible] merit was perfectly [illegible] merely a mother-in-law that [illegible] always command esteem: it is an [illegible] and a delightful companion. [illegible] more worthy of our admiration [illegible] noble-minded woman contemplated [illegible] death, which she expected from the [illegible] with astonishing firmness and [illegible] was so tender and so timid [illegible] displayed the utmost fortitude [illegible] with good things and sacred [illegible] had a [illegible] surprising avidity, by the use [illegible] provisions in the last moments [illegible] particulars to you, Sir, because [illegible] sentiments, and will be

THE MARQUIS D'HÉRICOURT

gratifying to the friendship you have borne for her whom we lament; and at the same time my mind is so full of them, that it is a relief to me to find a man so well disposed as you are to listen to the recital, and take pleasure in hearing it. I hope, Sir, that the memory of a friend who highly esteemed you, will contribute to preserve to me the regard with which you have long honoured me: I prize it too highly, and wish it too much, not to deserve it a little.

POSTSCRIPT

As some doubt has always existed as to the day and date on which Madame de Sévigné died, the ***Register of Burials*** of the Collegiate Chapel of Saint-Sauveur's, at Grignan has been consulted and the following is a translation of the entry which records the interment:

> *"On the* 18*th of April,* 1696, *there was interred in the tomb of the Family of Grignan,* DAME MARIE DE RABUTIN-CHANTAL, MARQUISE DE SÉVIGNÉ, *who died on the preceding day.*
>
> (*Signed*) DE LUBAC.
>
> *Curé of Jacomin and Coulon."*

THE END OF THE SEVENTH AND LAST VOLUME.

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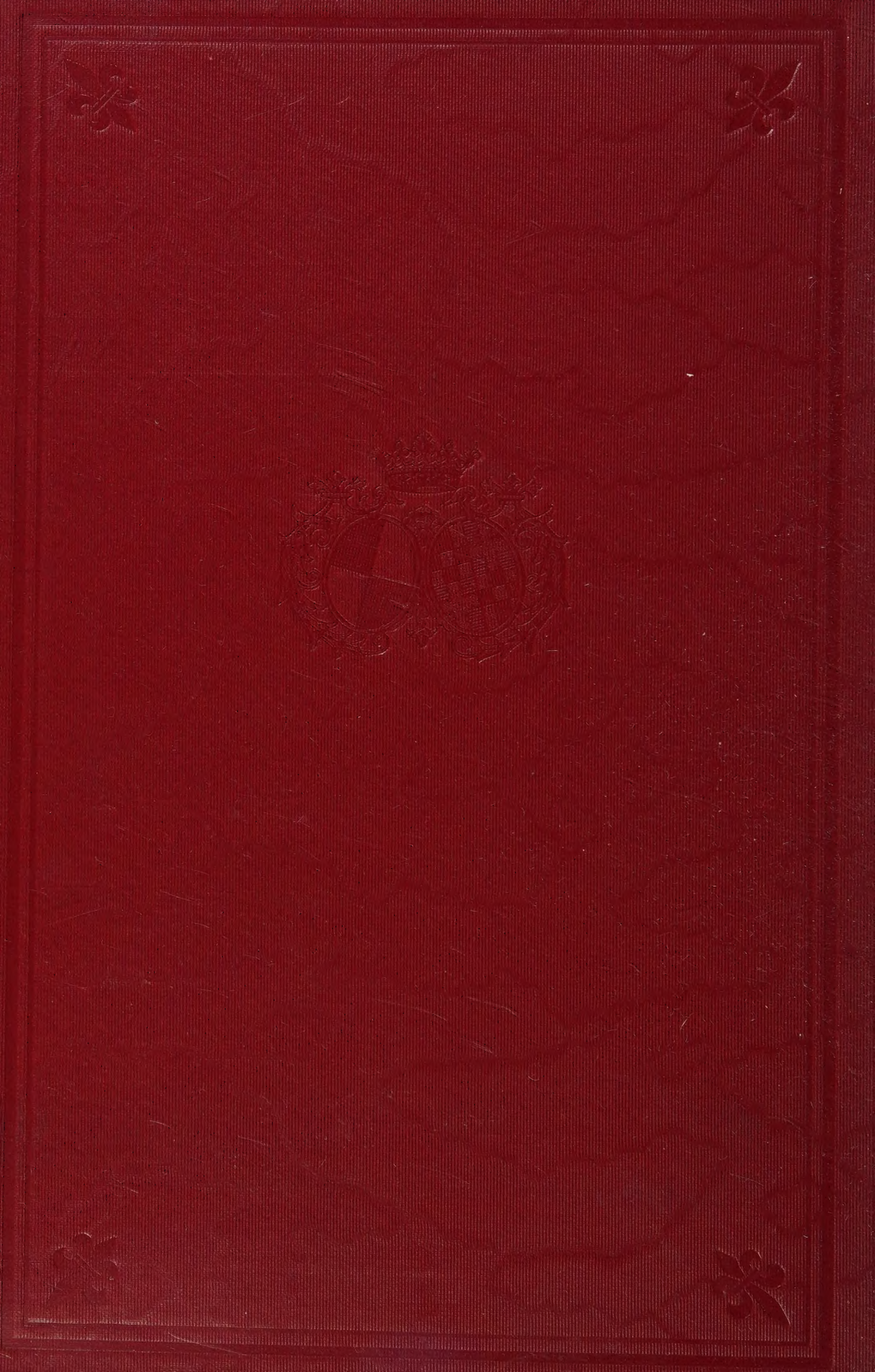
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